

THE ACADEMY.

A WEEKLY REVIEW OF LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART.

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CONTENTS.

REVIEWS:	PAGE
Napoleon by Flashlights	25
"Bab"	26
Travels in Indo-China	27
Biography in Little	28
A Provost of Elton	30
RECENT MENTION	30
NOTES AND NEWS	31
THE "ACADEMY'S" AWARDS TO AUTHORS	34
REPUTATIONS RECONSIDERED:	
III., Lord Tennyson	34
MILLAR AT BURLINGTON HOUSE	38
THE BOOK MARKET	37
The Bitter Cry of a Second-hand Bookseller	38
THE WEEK	39
New Books Received	39
PETER THE GREAT	39
CORRESPONDENCE	40
BOOK REVIEWS REVIEWED	42
FASHION SUPPLEMENT	3-4

REVIEWS.

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By a reader with the smallest knowledge of Napoleon's career, this book will be found graphic and vital to the last degree. Here we have, not the man of the Napoleonic legend, nor yet the petty domestic Napoleon of some unedifying backstairs memoirs, but what we might call the most private aspect of the public Napoleon. It does not, of course, show us the Emperor as a military genius, nor yet Napoleon as seen by his valet. But in almost all other respects it is a microcosm of the great conqueror. The first thing which stands out from it is his preterhuman administrative power: in its extensive and unfaltering energy a Nasmyth steam-hammer, which can crush a bar of iron or crack a walnut. War, finance, police; the direction of his subject kings and kingdoms; the watching of some petty miserable suspect; the admonishment of a pope or a newspaper: he turns rapidly, clearly, detailedly, from one to the other, and issues the most diversified edicts in a breath. Now he is twirling the affairs of Spain between his fingers like a teetotum, now he is playing the match-making mamma over his brothers' obnoxious marriages. He

breaks to shivers the dreaded army of Prussia, the legacy of Frederick the Great; and then pauses on the morrow of Jena, to decree the preservation of Paris from the wind of Mme. de Staël's petticoats. He regulates with the same minuteness the management of the State moneys, and the caricatures of the English which are to be published in the French papers. The impression is stupendous. Surely never was there such an organiser.

The next prominent feature in these letters is the irresistible arrogance of his autocracy. Our own Kaiser Wilhelm appears by the side of him a very indifferent performer, though on the present European stage Wilhelm is the most noted actor of what the Elizabethans called "a huffing part." The Kaiser can do little without rhodomontade and second-rate rhetoric; he clucks more over a ship or two at Kiao-Chau than Napoleon over the deposition of the Spanish monarchy. There is a world more stinging masterfulness in the first Buonaparte's curt matter-of-fact absolutism; his "It is my will," "You will do so-and-so," "You will let so-and-so know my sovereign displeasure"; the brief way in which he treats popes and kings as children, high functionaries as lackeys; his movements of his political pieces as simply as Blackburne playing a blindfold game. Bismarck is said to have treated his secretaries "as if they had stolen the silver spoons." It was little better to be a subordinate of Napoleon. All by turns are rated like schoolboys. The wretched brothers whom he set up in the regal business bore the brunt of the most scathing lectures. Most of them deserved it. He called them fools, and he called them by their names. He paid dearly for the nepotism which led him to make kings of men with all his own inadequacy of training, and without his marvellous compensation of genius. They all failed him; for they were not even soldiers, and what he needed first and foremost was soldierly allies. Yet when he tried a variation, by making a soldier king of Sweden, his nominee fought against him in the uprising of Europe.

The King of Westphalia, his brother Jerome, receives some of his most intolerable plain-speaking:

"I have met few men with so little circumspection as you. You are perfectly ignorant, and you follow nothing but your own fancy. Reason decides nothing in your case, everything is ruled by impetuosity and passion. I do not desire to have any correspondence with you beyond what is indispensable as regards Foreign Courts, because they make you dance steps, and expose your want of harmony before the eyes of Europe; which I am not inclined to permit you to do. As for your household and financial affairs, I have already told you, and now tell you again, that nothing you do accords with my position and experience, and that your mode of action will bring you little success."

To which he adds in his own hand, "I love you, my dear fellow, but you are terribly young." In another letter he tells him: "You do not know men yourself, and you try to teach me to know them." Of such kind is letter after letter to Jerome, whom he nevertheless held by to the last,

only to find him useless in his final emergency. Louis, King of Holland, is visited with even more astounding language; and Louis alone, of all the Buonapartes, was a man of feeling and principle. He wished to govern for the benefit of his people; whereas Napoleon was intent on the Gallicisation of all the subject kingdoms. Doubtless the Emperor was right politically. It was impossible to make French rule popular with the annexed states, and the only thing was to hold them by the strong hand, as the Germans hold Alsace. But Louis honestly resented such methods, and was, therefore, at perpetual war with his brother, till the Emperor finally deposed him. There is, perhaps, nothing here quite so trenchant as a previously published letter to the unhappy Louis, with its recurrent burden—"Don't be a fool." Nevertheless, such charming amenities as these are quite enough:

"What can I say to you? That which I have told you a hundred times already. You are no king, and you do not know how to be a king! . . . I have portfolios of complaints from my shipowners against your agents, and if you do not put a stop to the vile behaviour of your admirals to my flag, beware lest I put a stop to it myself. . . . You know very well that everything you do is opposed to my opinion, and that I have often told you I foresaw the changeableness and folly of your action would ruin your kingdom? . . . I thank you for the interest you take in my health. I should not think it very sincere, if I were to seek its proof in your speeches in which you strive to tarnish my glory—if that were possible to a man like you, who has done nothing at all."

In another letter, not to Louis but to Jerome, he tells him: "You make war like a satrap. Did you learn that from me?" Such phrases are often in his mouth, when he is addressing his brothers or his marshals: "You never learned that in my school"; "This is not what I expect from a man trained in my school." The Napoleonic school was as little scrupulous as the school of Fagin. The naked treachery by which he tried to occupy Lisbon and seize the Portuguese fleet together with the king, keeping Portugal amused with negotiations, while his army was advancing without declaration of war, is here flagrantly revealed. The high-handed and secret methods which he employed during his long struggle with the Pope are another interesting disclosure of these letters. Treachery, misrepresentation, falsehood, he is shown employing as recognised weapons of State. One of the minor impressions from these letters is that Napoleon was less able as a foreign statesman than in his other capacities. He cuts his Gordian knots with the sword; but in diplomacy he appears hardly a match for the Continental ministers. On the very eve of the campaign of Jena he is still sure that Prussia will never venture war; that she only needs to be humoured and managed like a tetchy child. He has no comprehension of the magnitude of his Spanish task, though history (to which he frequently appeals with more fluency and confidence than accurate knowledge) should have taught him that the difficulties of a

Spanish invasion only begin with the overthrow of the regular army. In the somewhat parallel case of Russia he probably had no choice save war; but the Spanish business was one of the hugest mistakes of his career. The army of Spain might have averted Leipsic, had it been free for use. The final letter of the volume has a singular pathos. It is written on the morrow of Waterloo, and is the mere feverish raving of a shattered and desperate man.

"I will raise a hundred thousand conscripts. I will arm them with muskets taken from the Royalists, and the ill-disposed members of the National Guard. I will raise the whole of Dauphiné, the Lyonnais, and Burgundy. I will overwhelm the enemy."

It almost recalls those piteous words of the fallen Lear: "I will do such things—what they are yet I know not." So dramatically ends a captivating and valuable book, and a destiny of strangely tragic brilliance which still sways the imaginations of mankind.

"BAB."

The Bab Ballads. By W. S. Gilbert.
(Routledge & Sons.)

In preparing this new edition Mr. Gilbert was not well advised. In the first place, no book of comic verse should extend to 554 pages; human nature is frail, it cannot endure so much. Mr. Gilbert would have done well to omit all the "Songs of a Savoyard"—that is to say, the numbers from his Savoy operas, which are not at all in keeping with the *Bab Ballads* and sometimes are positively discordant. Take, for example, this ingenious mock-Elizabethan "conceited" lyric:

"Is life a boon?
If so, it must befall
That Death, when'er he call,
Must call too soon.
Though fourscore years he give,
Yet one would pray to live
Another morn!
What kind of plaint have I,
Who perish in July?
I might have had to die
Perchance in June!
Is life a thorn?
Then count it not a whit!
Man is well done with it;
Soon as he's born
He should all means essay
To put the plague away;
And I, war-worn,
Poor captured fugitive,
My life most gladly give—
I might have had to live
Another morn!"

It is pretty and quaint and very dexterous, but how ill does it consort with its companions, "Sir Guy the Crusader"—

"His views were exceedingly proper:
He wanted to wed,
So he called at her shed,
And saw her progenitor whop her
Her mother sit down on her head"—

and "Haunted"! No; Mr. Gilbert has endeavoured to fuse irreconcilable elements, and the result is a huge and somewhat disconcerting jumble.

But he has done worse than this: he has re-drawn most of his best pictures. The cuts in the original editions, and in *Fifty Bab Ballads* published in 1877, signed "Bab," were almost as good as cuts need be: they had crispness, fun, and they corroborated and strengthened the text so ably as to make them almost perfect not only as independent comic drawings, but as illustrations. Yet Mr. Gilbert apparently has never shared this view. "I have always felt," he says in the preface to the new edition, "that many of the original illustrations . . . erred gravely in the direction of unnecessary extravagance. This defect I have endeavoured to correct." The pity of it!—as if unnecessary extravagance were not the life-blood of Bab's humour. And the unreason of it, because the unnecessary extravagance of the text still remains, even if that of the pictures has been eliminated. Mr. Gilbert is, however, the author, and the book is his, and he may, we suppose, do what he likes with it; but we retain the right to grumble. And more, Mr. Gilbert is not the draughtsman he was: his hand has lost its strength, his line is no longer decisive, his sense of the respective value of black and white has left him, so that his new pictures, with few exceptions, are just ordinary amateur comic work, and we linger with relief over those ballads whose old cuts have been permitted to stay untouched—over "The Rival Curates" and "Sir Macklin," "The Bishop of Rum-ti-foo" and "The Perils of Invisibility." Once the correction of unnecessary extravagance has compelled the artist to sacrifice a stanza. It will be remembered that one of the pictures to "Thomas Winterbottom Hance" represents the two gladiators in the ring, and their mothers, shrunken almost to nothing, looking on. It is a piece of delightful fooling, emphasised by the explanatory lines:

"The mothers were of decent size,
Though not particularly tall;
But in the sketch that meets your eyes,
I've been obliged to draw them small."

That has all been swept away; and the revised mothers need no apology—and raise no smile.

Fortunately—and we have now done with complaints—Mr. Gilbert has not thought it needful to alter the text of the ballads. It is true that in the amusing nonsense entitled "Barnaby Bampton Boo" the young woman who once was called "Carrotty Nell" is now chastened to "Volatile Nell"; but in the main the stories are as they were when they first diverted readers, some thirty years ago. Some, we must confess, hardly bear re-reading, but the best are still entertaining, and we have spent a most agreeable hour in renewing old impressions. Particularly have we enjoyed meeting again with some of the pieces not included in the collection known as *Fifty Bab Ballads*, which, for most people, has been the only edition. Among these is the story of "Babette's Love."

"Jacot was, of the Customs bold,
An officer, at gay Boulogne,
He loved BABETTE—his love he told,
And sighed, 'Oh, soyez vous, my own!'
But 'Non!' said she, 'JACOT, my pet,
Vous êtes trop scragegy pour BABETTE.'"

Instead she loved Bill, a marine, gifted with a graceful way of leaning against a post; and she told Jacot as much:

"Oh, mon!" exclaimed the Customs bold,
'Mes yeux!' he said (which means 'my eye'),
'Oh, chère!' he also cried, I'm told,
'Par jove,' he added with a sigh,
'Oh, mon! oh, chère! mes yeux! par jove!
Je n'aime pas cet enticing cove!'"

Bill's captain heard of Bill's depravity.

"He wept to think a tar of his
Should lean so gracefully on posts,
He sighed and sobbed to think of this,
On foreign, French, and friendly coasts.
'It's human natur', p'raps, if so,
Oh, isn't human natur' low!'"

And so on. Here we have one phase of Mr. Gilbert's peculiar humour in a nutshell: the elevation of an infinitesimal peculiarity or habit into an offence of serious import and magnitude. In the topsy-turvy world which he has invented, every inhabitant of which is mad, such exaggerations and inversions are the order.

Humour of this mechanical kind is simple, but in the hands of a clever workman it can be made quite irresistible. Mr. Gilbert does it to perfection. "Mister William" is his masterpiece—but "Captain Reece" and "The Martinet," "The Bishop of Rum-ti-foo" and "The Bishop of Rum-ti-foo Again," "The Rival Curates" and "Etiquette," "Annie Protheroe" and "Gentle Alice Brown," "Thomas Winterbottom Hance" and "The Baby's Vengeance," "The King of Canoodle Dum" and "Ellen McJones Aberdeen"—these are fine enough performances. One may become a little weary of the formula, but the execution is admirable.

Another of Mr. Gilbert's tricks is to extract fun from truthfulness and credulity. In real life people lie, and disbelieve each other; in the land of Bab they accept all statements. No sooner does Private James inform General John that they were changed at birth, than General John degrades himself to the ranks and elevates Private James to the position of commander; no sooner does Paley Vollaire, who is bankrupt, make a similar remark to Frederick West, than Frederick West hands him his hard-earned savings.

Again, tenacity to life and respect for life are the ruling passions of the normal man. In Mr. Gilbert's world death becomes, therefore, a mere incident, whether of oneself or of another. When Gentle Alice Brown went to confessional and admitted:

"I have helped mamma to steal a little kiddy from its dad,
I've assisted dear papa in cutting up a little lad,
I've planned a little burglary and forged a little cheque,
And slain a little baby for the coral round its neck;"

this is what happened:

"The worthy pastor heaved a sigh, and dropped a silent tear—
And said, 'You mustn't judge yourself too heavily, my dear.
It's wrong to murder babies, little corals for to fleec;
But sins like these one expiates at half-a-crown apiece."

'Girls will be girls—you're very young, and flighty in your mind;
Old heads upon young shoulders we must not expect to find.
We musn't be too hard upon their little girlish tricks;
Let's see—five crimes at half-a-crown—exactly twelve-and-six.'

'Oh, father,' little Alice cried, 'your kindness makes me weep,
You do these little things for me so singularly cheap.'

But when Gentle Alice Brown went on to say that she had seen a young man and had winked at him, the pastor held out no hope of forgiveness. He informed Brown *père*, and Brown *père* arranged for the young man's immediate removal. He said:

"I've studied human nature, and I know a thing or two;
Though a girl may fondly love a living gent,
as many do,
A feeling of disgust upon her senses then will fall
When she looks upon his body chopped particularly small."

All this would be very horrible if we looked at it calmly, just as so much of that American humour which jests at death would be horrible; but we are not permitted to be calm. Mr. Gilbert supplies the right atmosphere—the laughing gas—with which to take his extravagance.

How the *Bab Ballads* will strike readers who are now coming to them for the first time, we cannot say. We suspect, however, that their heyday is over. Taste in humour has changed, and much that was funny thirty years ago is funny no longer. Extravagant fun, particularly, is out of date, owing, probably, to the surfeit of it which the enterprise of America has offered. The humorist to-day is required to keep closer to the fact. But for readers of an older generation Bab has still strong attractions.

TRAVELS IN INDO-CHINA.

From Tonkin to India by the Sources of the Irrawadi—January, 1895-January, 1896. By Prince Henri d'Orleans. Translated by Hamley Bent, M.A. Illustrated by G. Vuillier. (Methuen.)

EXILED royalties have the most difficult position in the world to maintain with any dignity; they are frequently in the extreme condition of genteel poverty, and even when this humiliation is spared them—as it is spared to the House of Orleans—their path lies along the very brink of the ridiculous. Yet in this questionable eminence, and, perhaps, by reason of the pathetic irony in their surroundings, they succeed frequently in producing picturesque and taking characters. Prince Henri is a singularly good example; the very man to have headed such a raid as Charles Edward's in the "forty-five"; an elegant figure of a "Young Pretender." France denies him a career; he does not seek it (like the heir of the Buonapartes) in Russia's service; but the world is wide, and, like a young man

of spirit, he sets out to explore it, in the interests of the country where his uncle is still, to not a few adherents, "the king." We have heard of him in Abyssinia; but this book relates an earlier adventure. In January, 1895, he set out, accompanied by M. Roux, a naval lieutenant, and another Frenchman—M. Briffaud—from Hanoi, in Tonkin, to strike the Mekong River, explore its course up to the Thibetan frontier, and push west from there into Assam—in short, to go overland from China to India, skirting the borders of Upper Burmah, and keeping south of Thibet. It was a stiff piece of travel, but the French, so little disposed to settle down in any new country, have always been among the best explorers.

The book, to begin with, has a considerable scientific value. A very careful log, with observations, was kept by M. Roux, and is published in an appendix. So is a list of the natural history and botanical specimens collected by Prince Henri, who, although not a man of science himself, knows what to bring home; and perhaps the most interesting of all his finds are the examples of Mosso and Lolo MSS. reproduced in facsimile with a translation. The Lolo, like the Chinese, have separate characters for each word; the Mosso are picture writing. There is, however, no explanation given of these which is in the least adequate for the uninitiated. All these scientific matters are relegated to the appendices; the book itself is popular in style and intention; and a very readable, light-hearted narration it is, describing travel among the many peoples of many speeches who fringe the Chinese Empire. The queer folk and their queer customs are duly chronicled; but even stranger, perhaps, is the glimpse into mission life away far up here in the interior among an unfriendly race with a government who secretly incite to outrage. After months of wandering along the Mekong, through great tracts untravell'd by Europeans, the party at last debouched upon the plain in which lies Lake Erhai and the large town of Tali-fou, the chief centre of commerce in Western Yunnan.

"At the base of the hills, in stony chaos, lay the cemetery—the town of the dead at the gate of the living. We reached the river that forms the outlet of the lake; and here three routes converged—the one from the capital (Yunnan), our own, and that from Burmah, called the Ambassadors' Road. Along the last-named stretched into the distance the posts of the new telegraph line from Bhamo—the Future; and here, on the right bank of the river—the Past, a grey loop-holed wall, with battlements and bastions crumbling to decay, vestiges of the Mussulman war. It was dark by the time we came to the gate of Tali: luckily, it had not yet been closed. A tunnel led under the ramparts, and, once inside, we asked to be brought to the house of the French Father. After a long détour, our guide stopped before a dwelling and hailed loudly for admittance; then, finding a side door open, entered. What was our surprise to hear a feminine European voice! The owner at the same moment appeared at the head of the staircase with a companion, both dressed as Chinese, and disclosed herself as a young English lady."

She was the wife of the Protestant missionary. Prince Henri stayed for some time with the French Father Legnilcher, and

heard later from him of the old persecutions, when the Christians had to invent a private dialect for use among themselves ("devil-talk," the Chinese called it) and of the secret society, "the United Brotherhood," which organised the persecutions. It certainly seems that mission work in China is justified of its results; any religion, indeed, is an advance on the various forms of Chinese superstition—for the purer forms of their teaching have no hold on the people. Prince Henri notes that the Houi-houi, or Mussulmans, are much better to have dealings with than the other Chinese. But the Christians whom the expedition took on from Tali—seven of them—seem to have been real good men, and the interpreter Joseph a treasure. He was a youth who had been trained for the priesthood, but feeling no vocation had married and become a trader, but preserved his knowledge of Latin! In this tongue—or some modification of it—did he and the Prince hold communication through the rocky Thibetan ranges and by the sources of the Irrawadi!

Of Yunnan, the slice of China which France is likely to annex, Prince Henri gives no very brilliant account. It does not seem a rich country, though, perhaps, if it were rid of mandarins and their exactions prosperity might appear. But, even on a Frenchman's showing, the French system of colonial government is not much more economical. Here is a crucial example of what is likely to happen in the Far East. Mong-tse is a considerable Chinese town just beyond the French border; its trade should naturally come down the Songhai to Haiphong; but the freights and dues are so high on the French water that nine-tenths of the foreign trade, according to Prince Henri, goes down the Si-kiang to Canton and is in English hands. But when France occupies Hainan—as she will certainly do—she will also occupy Pakhoi, a port on the mainland opposite; from Pakhoi she will push up to the middle of Si-kiang, and from that moment our trade with Mongtse will be either cut off or desperately hampered. It is not an agreeable prospect, and it is only one of many such.

Except for the Christians, Prince Henri says little good of any Chinese. It was a relief to him to reach the Lissous, and other tribes of the Thibetan border, where edicts of the Tsung-li-Yamen hardly run; but no impression is stronger from reading this book than the slackness of all ties in that vast agglomeration of provinces. Even at Tali people seemed scarcely aware that China was then at war with Japan. The notion of a united movement of the Yellow Race seems a mere nightmare. It is hardly conceivable that China should ever grow aggressive; but it might prove a difficult country to subdue. Travel was nowhere easy; it was most difficult along the march westward from the Mekong to Assam, across an interminable series of clefts and chasms. Indeed, at this point the expedition was in grave danger of loss by starvation; its worst time came just at the end, after they left the Khamtis, the first people beyond the border of Assam. It was with a sense of great deliverance that they reached the outposts of civilisation, and were cordially welcomed

by the English magistrate. This is how our Raj strikes a foreigner :

"Sadiya is the extreme north-east outpost of the British Indian empire. Mr. Needham's position is that of Assistant to the Political Service, and he is in supreme and sole charge. He has passed twenty-eight years in India, and exercises the functions of Resident, judge, and commandant of the troops, of whom there are one hundred under native officers. Another five hundred sepoys could be summoned by telegraph within twelve hours. In addition to the importance involved by his relations with the frontier tribes, he governs in and around Sadiya more than 60,000 people. After thirteen years spent in this district, he speaks besides Hindustani: Bengali, Thai (of which he has compiled a grammar), Singpho, Assamese, Abor (also with a grammar in preparation), and Mishmi. What an example to France of the right man in the right place! and what a simplification of the world of vice-residents, *commis de résidence*, and *chanceliers*, all engaged in manipulating the papers which we deem indispensable to the administration of a province. Here one hand controls the whole. It is true that he is well paid, and that after thirty years' service he will be entitled to a pension. He submits his claim for travelling expenses, and it is discharged to him direct. There is none of that system of mistrust to which we are too prone. The English place implicit confidence in the zeal of their officers to work their hardest for the interests of their empire."

The praise is frank, generous, and merited; and it is only fair to admit, what Prince Henri insists on, that in the East we have stepped into the heritage of Duplex. In how many quarters of the world has such enterprise paved the way for the English to enter in and complete the edifice? Neither under a monarchy nor under a republic has France shaken off the curse of officialism. We commend the book to many readers. The pictures are lavish; many are photographs—some too obviously not: there is a rope bridge whose top cable is drawn no thicker than the other strands. The translation has been done presumably by an Orientalist, and should have been revised by someone who knew, for instance, that "trompe" means an elephant's trunk. Mr. Bent translates it "trumpet."

BIOGRAPHY IN LITTLE.

Philip II. of Spain. By Martin A. S. Hume. Foreign Statesmen Series (Macmillan & Co.)

THIS is pre-eminently the age of the hand-book. Our writers for the most part cannot write—and their readers will not read—the ponderous histories and treatises such as their ancestors dealt in, and the modern historian excels in the production of concise monographs and biographies, of "Epochs of History," and the like. Such excellence is by no means to be despised. The books are usually accurate and scholarly. Often their modest two hundred pages represent an immense amount of independent research and the consultation of many a neglected original authority, as well as the "boiling down" of all the old unmanageable tomes in which a more leisurely age was wont to seek its in-

formation. Mr. Martin Hume's contribution to Messrs. Macmillan's "Foreign Statesmen Series," *Philip II. of Spain*, is an admirable example of this kind of work. Mr. Hume, who is the editor of the *Calendar of Spanish State Papers of Elizabeth*, is thoroughly master of his subject. In the short space of some two hundred and sixty pages he has brought together an immense range of material. He has gone to the original and unpublished authorities in many cases for his facts, and has succeeded in making his sketch at once comprehensive and succinct. His view of Philip is, on the whole, a favourable one, though he is free from excessive partiality. As we see him in these pages, he stands before us as a gigantic failure, his vast schemes all frustrated, his ambitions humbled. To many temperaments he can never be a sympathetic figure. He is too cold and hard and calculating. He lacks dash and brilliancy. His courage is not conspicuous and his generosity infinitesimal; moreover, his reign is pre-eminently stained with the atrocities of the Inquisition, and that alone repels many who might otherwise admire this cold, strong man. As a statesman, too, he is disappointing, with his incapacity for rapid decision and prompt action. Mr. Hume allows all this, but at the same time he dwells lovingly on his higher qualities, and no one will put down this book without a feeling of sympathy and pity for its subject. Here, if anywhere, was a man whose epitaph might have been the famous *Miserere*. The one defect of Mr. Hume's book seems to us to lie in the writing. The English is not always impeccable, and it is often slipshod. But much may be forgiven its author for his wide knowledge, his comprehensive sympathy, and impartial weighing of authorities.

William the Silent. By Frederic Harrison. (Macmillan & Co.)

MR. FREDERIC HARRISON has not left the world in ignorance as to his preference in letters and character. Something of the moralist, a little of the "friend of man" and liberal philosopher, and a great deal of the honest lover of plain courage and worth, are apparent in all his writings. The Puritan—a very enlightened and liberal Puritan, to be sure—the uncompromising hater of Machiavellianism in every form, is written so largely over his work that we do not wonder at his turning to the history of hopeless struggling against odds, and men whose natures were of gray, unadorned simplicity.

The history of the rise of the Dutch Republic has been popularised by the excellent and rhetorical Motley, and, indeed, the bare fact is sufficiently marvellous. It is the tale of the wars of one man and a little people against the greatest power of the age. More, it is the narrative of the formation of a nation from apparently hopeless elements—a mere chaos of fanaticism and narrow passions. "It was formed without design," said Voltaire, "and in the end it belied all human forecast." And the man who chiefly worked the marvel was all his life unsuccessful; his record seemed entirely of defeat; he was by no means a great soldier, and his materials

forbade prosperous statesmanship; at the last he was murdered and ended an apparently ineffectual life in what seemed the blackest hour of all. And yet the foundation had been laid, and his enemies even in their hour of triumph had been irretrievably defeated. The seven Northern provinces, with the poor, hard, toil-worn populace, had been endowed with the spirit of a nation, and were on the eve of making sounding history among the states of Europe.

The whole life of the man is a series of anomalies. Though undeniably brave, he had no military genius, and he found himself pitted against the two greatest captains of the age, Alva and Alexander of Parma, as well as Don John, its most dashing soldier. A certain measure of statecraft was undoubtedly his, but his diplomacy was less subtle than ceaseless, and his contemporaries read him like a book. Yet he had to play the game against a master of the art like Granvelle, and attempt to treat with Elizabeth and her wary ministers. He was a Lutheran by the tradition of his house, a Catholic by upbringing, and he ended by becoming a Calvinist—"I am now bald and Calvinist," he writes, "and in that faith will I die"—but it is certain that his temper was very little that of the sectary. Yet all his life he had to strive with religious fanaticism both in his own and in the enemy's camp, and this calm and reasonable man had to face the whole crazy tribe of priests and pastors. And for what end? This, indeed, is the crucial question in the matter, and we can only give a hesitating answer. The whole rebellion had an element of the fortuitous. We may conceive him as a man of humane and liberal feeling, with an honest love for his people's welfare, protesting against Spanish cruelty. Little by little the chain of accident draws him deeper into difficulties, till he is forced into assuming a bolder front for his very manhood's sake. Gradually as difficulties thicken he begins to get sight of a great end—liberty of conscience, civil freedom, national spirit—and his soul is hardened to withstand. But it is always a rebellion under protest; he is "for peace" if his foes are "inclined for battle," and his policy is slow, cautious, even timorous at times. The key-note of the man's character is a certain grave simplicity and kindness—which made him pardon his would-be murderers and ask mercy even for the assassin—and a certain freedom from prejudice in all details of life. He is above sectarianism, and he is not scrupulous about his political morality. A lofty opportunism lies at the base of his policy; a spirit which was highly necessary for such rough times, and which, in spite of Mr. Harrison, it is the glory of the much-abused Florentine to have fostered.

A comparison with his great contemporary, Henry IV. of France, inevitably presents itself. Both men had real greatness, but both had something homely and pedestrian in quality. Mr. Harrison draws an excellent picture of the Prince:

"His shabby dress, with a loose old gown and a woollen vest showing through an unbuttoned doublet, was that of a poor student or a water-

man, and he freely consorted with the burgesses of that beer-brewing town (Delft). Yet in conversing with him an English courtier admits there was an outward passage of inward greatness. Now, at the age of fifty-one, he was bald, worn with wrinkles, and furrowed with age and with sorrows; the mouth seemed locked with iron, the deep-set watchful eyes, the look of strain and anxiety, give the air of a man at bay, who has staked his life and his life's work."

Ranke gives a similar account of Henry, who "preferred the hautboy and the bagpipe to elaborate music, who would mix with the common people at inns and ferries, and loved dearly to chaffer with horse-jockeys at country fairs." Both men had a sort of scheme for a Christian Republic, and both cared little for the squabbling of rival creeds. "If the Reformed opinions are false," wrote William, "if the Catholic Faith be based on eternal truth, their doctrines will melt away in good time, like the snow before the sun"; which may be compared with the opinion of Henry, that a man might work out his salvation in one religion as well as another. These are the words of the great Laodicean, and yet we need not say with Montaigne that "religion ne les touche ni l'un ni l'autre." William at least was essentially devout, but after the fashion of the Samaritan and not of the Levite.

Mr. Harrison has written a scholarly and shrewd study of a great character. The book is worthy of its place in an excellent series.

A PROVOST OF ETON.

Sir Henry Wotton: a Biographical Sketch.
By Adolphus William Ward. (Constable.)

THIS is a book of a peculiarly irritating type. It was open to Prof. Ward to treat his subject in either of two ways. He might have given us a work of research, exhausting the available material for a Life of Wotton, disinterring new facts, sifting evidence, and establishing once for all the authentic history of the man. This had been the way of the scholar. Or, taking some other point of view than Walton's—some point of view less naïve and more self-conscious—he might have drawn a new portrait, created a new, or at least a revised, conception of an unusually fascinating personality. This had been the way of the critic. Possibly he might have been felicitous enough to do both these things. Actually he has not quite done either of them. He has written a Monday Popular Lecture for some provincial college which hovers between the ideals suggested, and falls short of both. There is scholarship in the book. Prof. Ward has carefully studied Walton's *Life*, the miscellaneous papers printed in the *Reliquia Wottoniana*, and a good deal of illustrative matter bearing on his subject. But he has not done his work thoroughly: he has left many points unexamined and many difficulties unsolved. To take a single instance: "The precise date of Wotton's death is not mentioned by Walton, or in the dictionaries. It might perhaps be ascertainable at Eton." Why, then, did not Prof. Ward take steps to ascertain it? We expect this kind of half-

baked work from an amateur, but surely not from a professor. And if the exigencies of the lecture-room made incompleteness necessary, why publish? On the other hand, there is an attempt at criticism in the book also. The contrasts, the paradoxes, of Wotton's life, the double temperament in him of the man of affairs and the philosophical recluse; these Prof. Ward sees, and seeing would communicate his vision. Unfortunately he has the heaviest of heavy hands in these matters, and totally lacks that gift of phrase without which verbal portraiture can neither interest nor endure. His picture of the man is true in its main outlines, but it is wooden, cumbrous, lifeless; and an inferior portrait, to be hung as a pendant to Walton's, stands but a poor chance.

On the whole, then, one fears that the chief merit of Prof. Ward's book is, that it recalls one to Walton, and to a subject worthy of Walton's pen. Walton had fraternised with Wotton over their common friend, Dean Donne, in a Life of whom they had agreed to collaborate. But Wotton died before the book was written, and it fell to Walton to complete it and to supplement it by one of his intended colleagues. It was a congenial task, for Wotton's later years had all the simplicities and the pieties which were so attractive to the worthy draper. Like Donne, he had somewhat suddenly changed his whole manner of life. He had been a courtier and a busy diplomatist. One of the secretaries of Essex, he had escaped the fate of his unfortunate fellow, Henry Cuffe, by a hasty flight. Disguised as an Italian, under the assumed name of Ottavio Baldi, he had conveyed a warning of intended assassination to James VI. of Scotland from the Grand Duke of Florence, together with a casket of antidotes. When James became King of England he had, though a Stuart, sufficient gratitude to recall Wotton from his practical exile and to take him into his service. Wotton was a *persona grata* at Venice, and for many years he was permanent or "leiger" ambassador in that city of historic memories. He took a part in the disputes, partly political, partly theological, between the Republic and the Papacy, and was vehemently attacked by that shameless pamphleteer, Caspar Schioppius. Only once, however, did Wotton give his enemies a real handle, when with too ready epigram he wrote in an album that "an ambassador is a good man sent to lie abroad for the sake of his country." Schioppius pretended to take this as the serious doctrine of the English Foreign Office, and Wotton had some difficulty in making his peace with James. At a later period Wotton became famous for his chivalrous championship of "the Queen of Hearts," the fair and ill-fated Elizabeth of Bohemia, for whose sake so many brave men went to ruin. It was in her honour that Wotton wrote his prettiest verses, those beginning, "Ye meaner beauties of the night"; and when he left the Court of Ferdinand II. he gave away a jewel presented to him by the Emperor, "because he found in himself an indisposition to be the better for any gift that came from an enemy of his royal mistress, the Queen of Bohemia."

About 1622 Wotton found himself out of official employment and stranded with an inconsiderable fortune. He thought himself happy to obtain, through the friendship of Buckingham, the vacant Provostship of Eton. The income was a poor £100 a year; but on this he settled down, took orders, wrote both prose and poetry in a somewhat *dilettante* fashion, leaving most of his writings unfinished; fished, enjoyed the friendship of Izaak Walton and the Admirable Mr. John Hales, and superintended the education of the scholars of Eton like a virtuous and godly gentleman. He lived until 1639, and when seventy years of age wrote the following pleasant idyll, which appears in the *Complent Angler*:

"And now all nature seemed in love;
The lusty sap began to move;
New juice did stir the embracing vines,
And birds had drawn their valentines;
The jealous trout, that low did lie,
Rose at a well-dissembled fly:
There stood my friend, with patient skill,
Attending of his trembling quill.
Already were the eaves possessed
With the swift pilgrim's daubed nest:
The groves already did rejoice
In Philomel's triumphant voice.
The showers were short, the weather mild,
The morning fresh, the evening smiled,
Joan takes her neat-rubbed pail, and now
She trips to milk the sand-red cow;
Where, for some sturdy football swain,
Joan strokes a sillabub or twain.
The fields and gardens were beset
With tulip, crocus, violet;
And now, though late, the modest rose
Did more than half a blush disclose.
Thus all look'd gay, all full of cheer,
To welcome the new-liveried year."

Wotton's verse is scanty in quantity, and some of it is of no great account. Many pieces, moreover, are ascribed to him on somewhat unsatisfactory evidence. Prof. Ward would take from him even the famous epitaph, "On Sir Albertus Morton and his Lady":

"He first deceased. She for a little tried
To live without him: liked it not, and died."

In the following lines Wotton strikes a wise and manly note, struck after him by Wordsworth in the "Happy Warrior," and at an earlier date by Vaughan, in a poem called "Righteousness," which Wordsworth must surely have known:

"How happy is he born and taught
That serveth not another's will;
Whose armour is his honest thought,
And simple truth his utmost skill;

Who hath his life from rumours freed;
Whose conscience is his strong retreat;
Whose state can neither flatterers feed,
Nor ruin make oppressors great;

Who God doth late and early pray
More of His grace than gifts to lend;
And entertains the harmless day
With a religious book or friend.

This man is freed from servile bands
Of hope to rise or fear to fall;
Lord of himself, though not of lands,
And, having nothing, yet hath all."

It is a pleasant picture Walton draws of the aged Wotton, with his books and his Thames trout. Gladly he left courts and cities for cloister and pasture.

BRIEFER MENTION.

Rowing. By R. C. Lehmann. (The Isthmian Library: A. D. Innes & Co.)

WITHIN the compass of some three hundred and forty pages Mr. R. C. Lehmann has compressed what is most necessary to be known of the art of rowing. His book is written primarily for the novice, but it will be read with equal pleasure by the finished oar; for though the instructions to the young oarsman are very full and explicit, there is much that will interest the expert in the later chapters. Mr. Lehmann has had the collaboration of Mr. Guy Nickalls, who writes on sculling; of Mr. G. L. Davis, the famous Cambridge cox of the seventies, who deals with steering; and of Messrs. C. M. Pitman on Oxford College rowing, W. E. Crum on Eton rowing, and E. G. Blackmore on rowing in Australia. Mr. Lehmann himself deals with rowing in America, a subject which his recent experiences as coach of the Harvard Eight specially fit him. He is also responsible for the chapter on rowing at Cambridge, and for the remarks on the recent controversy on the health of the oarsman. To the freshman and the second year man at the Universities the opening chapters on oarsmanship will be of the greatest use; and the coach in a small college who often has to instruct others in what he scarcely understands himself will find his duties much simpler if he studies the cautions and hints carefully before getting into the stern of a tub. The two chapters on training and racing also contain many useful hints from Mr. Lehmann's ripe experience. As much, moreover, will be learned from the photographic illustrations of good and bad positions in rowing with which the text is well furnished, and after the awful example which faces page 50, a round back should be an impossibility. The book is very well illustrated with photographs, a most necessary precaution, as few draughtsmen know how to row, or if they do are singularly unfortunate in their efforts to put that knowledge on paper. The Isthmian Library *Rowing* may be safely recommended to all those who row or hope to row.

The Note-Book of Tristram Risdon. Edited by J. Dallas, F.L.S., and H. G. Porter. (Elliot Stock.)

IN 1714 the pirate Curll published the *Chorographical Description of Devon*. This is the common-place book of Risdon, its author, printed after a MS. existence of nearly 300 years. It contains several features of interest to the heraldically inclined; among others, many coats-of-arms not to be found elsewhere, and a correction of some early descents in the Courtenay pedigree. A few coats are given in facsimile of the originals. If they are fair specimens of the bulk of those tricked "by the Travail of Tristram Risdon, Gent.," it is certain that the "travail" of the editors in deciphering them must have been as painful as his own. Although neighbouring counties are included, most of the book is devoted to

Devonshire, in whose armorial roll meaner escutcheons are glorified in the company of those of Raleigh, Drake, Gilbert, and Grenville. Here, too, occur the family names of the judicious Hooker and the heraldic Upton. Let it not be forgotten that Devonshire gave birth to the father of English writers of blazon in Nicholas Upton, who in the loud days of Henry VI. serenely wrote of "heraldry, colours, and armouries, with the duties of chivalry, whence our modern writers have taken great light."

Analecta Eboracensia. Collected by a Citizen of York, Sir Thomas Widdrington, Knt. Edited by the Rev. Caesar Caine, F.R.G.S. (C. J. Clark.)

THE writer of this book sulked about its dedication, and his book appears 250 years after time. Sir Thomas Widdrington, a man of good lineage (he was descended from the Northumbrian Widdringtons) was Recorder of York and many other things under Charles I. and the Commonwealth, and he offered to dedicate his book, the fruit of several years of labour, to the Mayor and Corporation of York. But the Mayor and Corporation looked upon the book as a stone for an egg; and they sent Widdrington a pithy, peevish letter, telling him in plain terms that "a good purse is more useful to us than a long story," and hinting that to make the Ouse navigable were a nobler work than compiling history. Sir Thomas was so chagrined that he forbade the publication of his book. From that day to this it has remained in MS., and historians of York, like Drake, have arisen and helped themselves to Widdrington's facts, and said how sorry they were, and passed on. Now, when Widdrington's account of ancient York is itself ancient, it is printed by subscription; nor would the old knight—a self-seeking, consequential little man by all accounts—blush at sight of this handsome folio, with its list of weighty subscribers and its "process" illustrations. After all, he got the "process blocks" by waiting. Widdrington was one of our earliest topographers, and worked under many disadvantages; but he went to original documents, and copied them without mistakes; he was not orderly. There we leave him. It is too late to review a superseded history that was ready for the press 250 years ago.

The Making of Abbotsford. By the Hon. Mrs. Maxwell Scott. (A. & C. Black.)

IN this handsome and well-printed book Mrs. Maxwell Scott tells the story of her home, and discourses pleasantly on several incidents in Scots and French history. She has little of the serious historian; rather, her essays are the gossip of a well-informed woman with a love for the past, and some genuine national enthusiasm. The book is, of course, in no way propagandist, but it is clearly written from the standpoint of a religious party. The paper on "Mary Stuart," which was originally published by the Catholic Truth Society, is a pleasant statement of one side of the case. Her references are chiefly to violent Marians, but it is strange to find no mention of Froude, Sir John Skelton, M. Philippon,

and, above all, Mr. Swinburne. "The Scots Guard in France," which is chiefly a review of a book by Father Forbes-Leith, adds nothing to the work of Hill Burton, and Francisque-Michel. The few purely antiquarian papers are, as a rule, too slight to be of much value. Indeed, we like Mrs. Maxwell Scott best when she merely tells a good story, such as that of the Chevalier de Feuquerolles or the heroic Lady Nithsdale.

Pratt Portraits: Sketched in a New England Suburb. By Anna Fuller. (Putnam's.)

THESE little studies of New England life are in the *genre* which the art of Miss Wilkins has done so much to render illustrious. The inspiration is the same, with its constant effort to render fine qualities of the human spirit among unpromising surroundings; and if the narrowness and weariness of the life painted is more conspicuous, and its homely, remote beauty less conspicuous than in Miss Wilkins's work, that is, perhaps, partly a matter of temperament and partly because Miss Fuller writes of New England, suburban and sophisticated, Miss Wilkins of the simple village existence of New England proper. Of the individual stories, "Aunt Betsy's Photographs," "A New England Quack," and "A Yankee Quixote" strike us most. Aunt Betsy has her picture done "in front of the grapevine, her right hand in a black lace mitt, reposing upon the wicket-gate, and her voluminous skirts spreading on either side." The sitting is a secret one, and the dramatic production of the photographs in the family circle is the triumphant moment of the poor flabby, oppressed lady's life.

The Central Italian Painters of the Renaissance. By Bernhard Berenson. (Putnam's.)

THIS little study is a companion to the earlier volumes on *Florentine Painters* and *Venetian Painters* by which Mr. Berenson has already won golden opinions. A fourth volume on *North Italian Painters* will complete the series. Mr. Berenson's intimate knowledge of technique, befitting a disciple of Signor Morelli, together with his genuine critical gift, make him a most delightful guide to the study of Italian art. Moreover, he is an original thinker, and his speculations as to the psychology of æsthetic enjoyment give to his disquisitions a philosophical breadth and interest. The Central Italian schools are those of Siena, the Romagna, and Umbria, all of them largely influenced by Florence, and Mr. Berenson finds in them all a common tendency to develop the "illustrative" rather than the "decorative" side of painting; to excel, that is to say, more in the representation of ideas than in colour, tone, form, or movement. To this common quality individual artists add individual qualities. Piero dei Franceschi has his impersonality, Perugino his sense of space, Raphael his mastery of composition. Mr. Berenson appends valuable index lists of the works of a large number of painters, and prefixes a reproduction of Raphael's *La Donna Velata* in the Pitti Gallery at Florence. It is a practical and a highly stimulating little book.

THE ACADEMY FICTION SUPPLEMENT.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 8, 1898.

THE NEWEST FICTION.

A GUIDE FOR NOVEL READERS.

WEeping FERRY.

By MARGARET L. WOODS.

A volume of four stories by the author of *A Village Tragedy*. The title tale fills 226 of the 307 pages that go to the book. It is a sad story of the love of a girl of humble birth for a youth above her station. In the end the girl dies, for this is fiction. "I wonder at you," said her father to his wife "aving the 'eart to make butter the very day as we've lost our youngest daughter!" Elizabeth paused . . . "There's no sense in letting good cream spoil," she said. (Longmans & Co. 307 pp. 6s.)

DAVID LYALL'S LOVE STORY.

By "DAVID LYALL."

The Land o' the Leal has many admirers among sentimental Non-conformists; and a similar success may confidently be predicted for this new book. "David Lyall" is grave and pious and mildly humorous, and he has a power o' pathos. Who would ask more? We read here the narrative of his love for Euphan and the tedious winning of her; of London's impact on Scots; of journalism; and of other matters dear to kailyarders. (Hodder & Stoughton. 302 pp. 6s.)

THE NEW MAN.

By ELLIS PAXON OBERHOLTZ.

In this satire we meet with a new dialect—that of the Chicago German. It runs thus: "Yes, sur-et; Cheecawgo people never fails ven it kums ter cash. Dere iz nutin mean ur sparismionious about de Cheecawgo boys. Dey iz none uv yer slow vuns." It is well that novels are not often written thus. "In the story of *The New Man*," says the preface, "the new woman is developed to her logical conclusion, and the new man as he must needs become under the reaction of her influence. The story is made the vehicle of scientific truth regarding the emotional phases of our social life." (Levrytype Co., Philadelphia, Pa. 487 pp.)

OWEN TANAT.

By "ROBERT REES."

This is a book in which people say "Humph!" They also talk Welsh immoderately. The author translates it in footnotes, but that does not excuse them. One of these remarks we are tempted to repeat, because it means "O, hush your chatter"—"O taw a' th glebren"—and the book is longer than any book of fiction ought to be. At the same time, it is pleasantly written, although most of the incidents and conversations are as trivial as a tea-party. (Digby & Long. 476 pp. 6s.)

THROUGH ONE MAN'S SIN.

By HAMILTON ORTON.

The story of a naughty phrenologist who won and pretended to marry a wealthy Scotchman's daughter, and behaved very badly to her, so that she killed their child. It is a harrowing romance, and not very faithful to life. (Digby, Long & Co. 147 pp.)

TIM AND MRS. TIM.

By E. R. T. LANCEFIELD.

On the cover we read: "The Hit of the Season! Witty, Sarcastic, and Instructive." And on the fly-leaf: "This story will interest every wife whose husband is a 'club' or 'society' man to the neglect of his wife and family; and every husband whose wife, in his opinion, is too much of the 'new woman.' Other men and other women will also be amused, and perhaps edified, by its perusal." It has not amused us. (The International News Co. 145 pp. 1s.)

REVIEWS.

Fantasias. By "George Egerton."
(John Lane.)

By *Fantasias* "George Egerton" means very much the same thing that Olive Schreiner meant by *Dreams*—short moral stories wherein the characters are not men and women, but types of men and women, or personifications of abstract qualities. The new practitioner of the art of allegory takes, however, more liberty than her predecessor: she would not only teach but chastise also. The satire is bludgeonly; and "George Egerton" mingles real and ideal until we are disconcerted by bizarre effects. For her method she seems to have gone to Hans Andersen, Bunyan, and Thackeray. "The Well of Truth" has this passage:

"No one is in society who does tell the truth," added the governess, who was a privileged person; 'mendacity is the essential oil of the social machinery.'

'You need not be a liar, my dear,' said the family friend, who was in the Foreign Office, 'because you have acquired the tongue of well bred society: it only needs diplomacy. . . .'

In "The Star-Worshipper" we find this:

"Sometimes the moonbeams made a ladder up which she used to climb and see spirits, with whom she spent hours in sweet converse. So one night, when the reeds were swaying their slim green bodies to the rhythm of their old-world melody, and the river rippled and whispered to the flowers on its banks, and the white eggs of the night birds gleamed as signposts for the mother birds out moth-faring in the gloom, and the night crooned lullabies, and the music of the spheres above stole down and mingled with the bass voice of the earth below, she gave birth to a little lad."

The little lad grew up and became a poet, and two or three pages later we read:

"'It is Shakespeare!' said the schoolmaster.

'Every one can't be a Shakespeare,' sniffed one of the matrons, whose son wrote corner verse for the County Advertiser.

'No, but every one can be a minor poet,' snuffed the lady journalist, noting the reply on her cuff for future use."

We confess to disliking such transitions. A book called *Fantasias* might, at any rate, be free from smart lady journalists. As for the thought contained in these allegories, it is not new and not particularly subtle, but such as one might expect from a keen-sighted, intellectual woman with "views." The writing is often extremely clever: the clever, self-conscious writing of one who has read much. Poor human nature is very wrong indeed—we know that—but it gives us no pleasure to see the lash laid on with such relish as "George Egerton" displays.

* * * * *
Lin McLean. By Owen Wister.
(Harper & Brothers.)

LIN was a cattle puncher of Wyoming "in the old days"—the old days being the seventies—and this book sets forth his folly and his wisdom, his mistakes and his triumphs, his joys and his despondencies—in short, his making. The young man stands out square and firm, very human, very remote from our own clipped yew-walks of life, lawless and lovable, dare-devil and disarming, a fool and a saint; and at the back of him is ever the tremendous spaciousness of mountain and plain. The book is as good as a breeze.

Owen Wister, whose earlier work on similar lines—*Red Men and White*—is remembered kindly by all that read it, divides his new book into six episodes, making, however, as concrete a whole as if the story were continuous. The first shows us Lin at his most

reckless; in the second he wins a shameful wife; in the third she leaves him for her first husband; in the fourth Lin adopts her runaway son; in the fifth new and true woman comes into his life; in the sixth fate intervenes and he is made happy. The sequence is trite, but the treatment is fresh and vigorous and exhilarating. Mr. Wister's cowboys arouse in the mind of the English reader something of that excitement caused thirty years ago by the earlier stories of Bret Harte. Here is a daring frolic of Western idiom:

"'Bugged up to kill!' exclaimed one, perceiving Lin's careful dress. 'He, sure, has not shaved again?' another inquired, with concern. 'I ain't got my opera-glasses on,' answered a third. 'He has spared that pansy-blossom mustache,' said a fourth. 'My spring crop,' remarked young Lin, rounding on this last one, 'has juicier prospects than that rat-eaten catastrophe of last year's hay which wanders out of your face.' 'Why, you'll soon be talking yourself into a regular man,' said the other.

But the camp laugh remained on the side of young Lin till breakfast was ended, when the ranch foreman rode into camp."

And the following terse account of a streak of luck is real refreshment:

"Honey found fortune quickly too. Through excellent card-playing he won a pinto from a small Mexican horse-thief who came into town from the South, and who cried bitterly when he delivered up his pet pony to the new owner. The new owner, being a man of the world and agile on his feet, was only slightly stabbed that evening as he walked to the dance-hall at the edge of the town. The Mexican was buried on the next day but one. The pony stood thirteen-two, and was as long as a steamboat. He had white eyelashes, pink nostrils, and one eye was bright blue. If you spoke pleasantly to him, he rose instantly on his hind-legs and tried to beat your face."

These extracts tend to display Mr. Wister's humour rather than his powers of description and sympathy. But he has them. He can tell a story with excellent spirit, and he can compel his reader's interest everywhere. Here is a final quotation—the "Cowboy's Lament":

"Once in the saddle I used to go dashing,
Once in the saddle I used to go gay;
First took to drinking, and then to card-playing;
Got shot in the body, and now here I lay.
Beat the drum slowly,
Play the fife lowly,
Sound the dead march as you bear me along.
Take me to Boot-hill and throw the sod over me—
I'm but a poor cowboy, I know I done wrong."

* * * * *
Sunset. By Beatrice Whitby.
(Hurst & Blackett.)

This is a book of many merits and a few defects. It is a very careful and sympathetic study of a young woman, Frances Blake, neither very poor nor by any means ill-favoured, who by her own act has been shunted from the main line of life into a siding. She refused George Brand because he was poor. At twenty-five she still loves George Brand, who is now a widower; but "like a man he had taken no for his answer; like a woman she was dissatisfied at his having done so." Frances tells George she is sorry for the past and would gladly atone; but George prefers to remain as he is, and goes to Australia on business, while Frances takes charge of his little daughter. Finally George sends for his child, and Frances, left alone in the "sunset" of life, marries the vicar. After all, she is only twenty-nine when she consents to become Mrs. Hardacre, an age at which women of the present time certainly do not consider that their day is over. Nevertheless, Frances is interesting; so, too, is her flighty and foolish cousin Isabel, whose tripping forms a somewhat unnecessary under-plot. Miss Beatrice Whitby can tell a story; she has imagination, sympathy, and a modicum of humour. Wherefore it is all the more annoying to stumble again and again upon those solecisms which seem inseparable from feminine fiction. "Economy is doing without for we women." "Women, it has been said, will keep their own, though not their neighbour's secret, in contrary distinction to men." "The recognised ilk of easy-spoken, well-looking, conventionally conducted Britons." A writer who can draw such a character as Frances Blake ought not to spoil a whole book for a la'porth of grammar.

In Years of Transition. By Samuel Gordon.
(Bliss, Sands & Co.)

THIS book is a fantasy in spite of its realism in details. The incident is built up in a sort of epical structure, with little reference to every-day reality; hence the frequent gods from the machine do not trouble us greatly. The story is, so to speak, a problem in the air—a record of the doings of only half-known people in a curiously foreign atmosphere. It is the tale of a young man from the country, who comes to Paris with great expectations. He grows so poor that he can scarcely compass the necessities of life; but his love for the girl Fifine makes existence bright to him. Then suddenly he becomes fabulously rich; but he finds that he has only won a splendid isolation. In a state of nervous disease he fights his way through quixotry and folly, till at length fate takes the matter out of his hands, and sends him packing to a new country with hope and some measure of peace.

The book lives, in spite of its remoteness. It is careful work, with no easy rhetoric and no gaudy colouring. The writer has an eye for an odd contrast and a subtlety in character, and Mme. Fluguette, Touchepas, Pitoignac, and others, are not easily forgotten. There is no hint of propagandism, though the pivot of the tale is an industrial war. Above all, Camille himself has that about him which attracts one, and we follow his mad course, till he stands on the deck of the ocean-bound steamer, with an honest, friendly interest.

* * * * *
Maimo o' the Corner. By M. E. Francis (Mrs. Francis Blundell).
(Harper & Brothers.)

A pathetic little story of lowly life in a Lancashire village. Mrs. Blundell knows her people well, and writes with sympathy. She has, however, done better work than this: she is stronger when the grim and the comic mingle than when all is sad. Here, until the end, all is very sad indeed, almost too piteous, save for one or two humorous interludes. That in which Mrs. Kelly, the village poetess, reads her ode upon the silver wedding of Farmer Newton and his wife, is good comedy. The occasion was auspicious: all the important villagers were present, and Mrs. Newton has worn herself weary to spread a rich feast and excel the record established by Mrs. Norris at her husband's funeral.

"The poetess now rose, suffered her eyes to rove round the room once, and then, staring straight in front of her with a fixity of gaze a little embarrassing to the honest yeoman who sat immediately opposite, and swaying her body slowly backwards and forwards, began in a sepulchral tone:

'The sound of the joy-bells is heard on the hill.'

Farmer Latham threw up his hand to command attention.

'What hill?' he asked. 'There isn't sich a thing for ten mile round—nor a dale neither,' he added as an after thought.

Murmurs of disapproval greeted this uncalled-for piece of criticism, and Mrs. Newton observed with some dignity:

'It 'ud be the sandhills very like.'

'An' when wind blows fro' th' east,' added Tom Prescott from his end of the table, 'yo' can hear church-bells quite plain.'

This settled the question. Farmer Latham, leaning back on his chair, observed, a little confusedly, that he jist thought he'd put the question, but now he knew.

Mrs. Kelly, shifting her gaze so that it rested reproachfully on his rubicund face, began again:

'The sound of the joy-bells is heard on the hill,
And all hearts on this thrice happy day must be full;
For twenty-five years ago—reckon who may—
Was Mr. and Mrs. Newton's glad wedding-day.'

Here she paused to look round in triumph. Mrs. Norris drew in her breath with a sucking sound, and shook her head.

'Eh, dear, it's beautiful; it is that. I mind the piece hoo wrote for my poor Richard —'

Mrs. Newton's voice drowned hers: 'I think hoo's worked it up wonderful, hasn't hoo? So natural-like, "Twenty-five year ago—reckon who may," yo' know?'

'Ah!' responded Farmer Latham handsomely, 'it's true enough, onybody who likes, yo' know, met reckon, an' yet they could not mak' it more nor twenty-five year, nor less. Wonderful clever, I call it.'

It is hard to believe that anyone could be as persistently merciless and wrong-minded as Mrs. Newton is made to be; but Mrs. Blundell should know. Readers who value the tears that come of delight at the rightness of things will like the end of this book.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 8, 1898.

No. 1340, New Series.

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Occasional contributors are recommended to have their MS. type-written.

All business letters regarding the supply of the paper, &c., should be addressed to the PUBLISHER.

Office: 43, Chancery Lane, W.C.

NOTES AND NEWS.

THE most interesting literary event of the week is the publication in the *Telegraph*, synchronously with the *Youth's Companion* in America, of Mr. Gladstone's recollections of Arthur Henry Hallam. It is a sketch of great beauty. As boys at Eton they were the closest friends, bound by ties more worthy and secure than schoolboys commonly are; and biography is richer for Mr. Gladstone's tribute. It is surely a unique performance: an old man of eighty-seven (the essay was written last year) setting down luminously and powerfully the praises of a friend who has been sixty-four years in the grave!

We quote a few of the more easily separated passages:

"It is the simple truth that Arthur Henry Hallam was a spirit so exceptional, that everything with which he was brought into relation during his shortened passage through this world came to be, through this contact, glorified by a touch of the ideal . . . Whether he possessed the greatest genius I have ever known is a question which does not lie upon my path, and which I do not undertake to determine. It is of the man that I speak, and genius does not of itself make the man. When we deal with men, genius and character must be jointly taken into view; and the relation between the two, together with the effect upon the aggregate, is infinitely variable. The towering position of Shakespeare among poets does not of itself afford a certain indication that he holds a place equally high among men . . . In this world there is one unailing test of the highest excellence: it is that the man should be felt to be greater than his works. And in the case of Arthur Hallam all that knew him knew that the work was transcended by the man."

The glimpses of life at Eton seventy years ago; the friendly eulogy, at once so warm and so reasonable, so unstinted and so

tender; the shrewd and impressive asides on great and grave questions and issues; the incidental words of literary and general criticism—all serve to make the essay important and memorable, and to lead us to wish that Mr. Gladstone oftener pursued the reminiscent mood.

THE literary partnership between the late Alphonse Daudet and Mr. R. H. Sherard yielded a story which is shortly to be published in Mr. Sherard's English translation. The original plan was for Daudet to dictate and for Mr. Sherard subsequently to elaborate. But the dictated matter was so good and self-sufficient that Mr. Sherard wisely left it as it stood. The story will be called "My First Voyage: My First Lie." It is a reminiscence of the author's boyhood.

MR. KIPLING, who, accompanied by his family and Mr. J. Lockwood Kipling, sails to-day in the *Dunvegan Castle*, intends to make his trip to South Africa a complete holiday from work. His forthcoming volume of short stories is to be postponed from the spring to the autumn of this year.

MR. HENLEY's Essay on "Burns: His Life, Genius, and Achievement," which appeared in the concluding volume of *The Centenary Burns*, will shortly be published in a separate form by Messrs. Jack, of Edinburgh, at a shilling.

A NOVELIST in search of a good execution scene—there is one excellently done in *The Gadfly*—will find one all ready to his hand in a recent telegram from the *Daily News* correspondent at Berlin. Five haiducks—Servian robbers—were shot at Czaka a few days ago. The two most notable were Brkytsch and Woiko. This is how they died:

"As the procession passed a house, at the window of which Brkytsch discovered a pretty girl, he cried: 'Oh, women, women! It is you who have brought me to this.' Woiko smiled, and conversed the whole way. Of a high official he asked: 'Sir, do you think as many people will attend your funeral?' Turning to the gendarme who sat next to him, he said, 'Brother, do aim at the nipple of my left breast, so that I need not suffer so long.' It was nine o'clock when the execution ground was reached. Each of the haiducks was told to alight, and to stand next to a post which was erected by the grave destined to close over his body. Woiko appeared quite lively, and kept laughing and joking. Brkytsch had become serious and smoked a cigar, and the others stood silent and immovable as if they were already dead. Woiko's grave was close to that prepared for Brkytsch. When he noticed this, he said to him, 'Brother, don't be anxious. We shall remain close to each other. We shall soon find each other again' . . . Woiko requested to be allowed to die with open eyes, but he was refused. 'Why are you blindfolding us?' he said. 'When I killed men I did not first blindfold them.' The people were now forced back by the gendarmes. The Prefect gave a sign, the captain flourished his sword, the crack of rifles sounded, and the five men were men no more.

This is more than journalism, it is literature.

To the enterprise and industry of Mr. C. M. Falconer, of Dundee, is due the "Catalogue of a Lang Library"; which does not mean a library conspicuous for length, but one consisting entirely of the works of Mr. Andrew Lang. For ten years has Mr. Falconer worked, and he now has a list mentioning 658 volumes, in which, in some capacity or other, Mr. Lang figures. Think of it, think of the industry it implies—and Mr. Lang was once called the Divine Amateur! The divisions of the Catalogue are five: books written by Mr. Lang alone; books written in collaboration with others; books edited or prefaced by Mr. Lang; books and magazines containing contributions by Mr. Lang; volumes containing Mr. Lang's poems.

WE have received from Mr. Jerome K. Jerome a photograph of a Christmas card which he has received from a band of Russian admirers. It represents a view of St. Petersburg surrounded by visiting cards—one hundred and eleven in all—and is ascribed to Mr. Jerome, with the assurance that other of his works are eagerly anticipated in translation by his friends in St. Petersburg.

THE recipient says: "To Russia is a long cry in many senses, and to be read and liked in Russia is not too common an honour for an English writer. Madame Jarintzoff in sending the card writes me: 'Certainly you understand that it would be simply impossible to send you in that way the expression of sympathy from all your admirers in St. Petersburg; if all of them knew of the device and would be allowed to join us—then surely there would be no place for that Christmas card in your house! As it is, I had just to mention about it among our friends, and the idea instantly flew through many circles, and reached the theatres, and in a few days I received more cards than I could use in trying not to be too plump with our feelings. Please notice that everyone knew the strict and inevitable condition: *perfect sincerity*. You can see from all this how right we were to tell you in the summer that the moral success of your books is enormous here; all these persons (and several hundred more in St. Petersburg) have them and love them: notwithstanding the general small amount of bookbuyers with us.' I get so little honour now [Mr. Jerome adds] from a certain class of critic in my own country that I may be forgiven some gratification for my recognition abroad."

By the way, the same writer's statement, which has just appeared in the daily papers, that he is in no way interested in a certain forthcoming periodical, is one of the most complete and emphatic denials we can remember: "May I, Sir—not entirely in my own interests—ask your assistance in counteracting this falsehood? I am neither directly nor indirectly—not as proprietor in whole or in part—not as editor nor as contributor—not even as well-wisher, concerned with any such venture."

AN English lady is reported to be now at work in the Vatican Library, busily engaged in seeking corroboration of the theory that Dante was acquainted with the Venerable Bede's Latin version of the legend of the Irish saint Fursey, wherein a suggestion of the idea of the *Divine Comedy* is to be found. The lady has already written an essay on the supposed influence on Dante by the Irish legend, upon which Mr. Gladstone has thus commented: "It is indeed of great interest, and the presumptions you raise appear to be important. Dante's being acquainted with a remote local saint, such as Bede, is of itself remarkable, and if it was due to his studying in England, as I am inclined to believe he did, then England may have furnished the thread which brought into his view the root idea of his poem." Very little would be gained by proving any such dependence, A man's inspiration is nothing: his work is everything.

MR. JACOBS'S *Many Cargoes* and *The Skipper's Wooing* are to be added to the Tauchnitz Library. Meanwhile, Mr. Jacobs has, it is said, decided not to resign his position in the Post Office, a step which his literary friends are alleged, very unwisely, to have urged upon him. Instead, he will continue to endure what the *Bookman* calls "the sober routine of a Government Office." A number of busy literary men, it might be remarked, manage to endure it very easily.

THE late Sir Edward Augustus Bond, Sir Maunde Thompson's predecessor as Principal Librarian of the British Museum, survived his receipt of the distinction of K.C.B. only a few days. It is curious that one of the last scholars selected for honour by Her Majesty—the late Sir John Skelton, whose knighthood came with the Diamond Jubilee—died also within a week of its conferment. The late Sir Edward Bond married a daughter of "Thomas Ingoldsby."

THE first number of *L'Enfant Terrible* is probably now in the hands of expectant Americans. The editors, it seems, are known as Governors, and the office is called the Nursery. One of the Nursery Rules says: "No one not duly appointed an Honorary Infant shall be allowed to contribute, except on payment of the usual space rates (ten dollars per column)." Among the contents of No. 1 is the story of the Winchester Repeating Hen, which seems to promise entertainment.

"The transformation of the old Boston Public Library into a menagerie has called forth verse from Mr. Gelett Burgess, of *L'Enfant Terrible*, two stanzas of which follow:

"A Literary Zoo!
A Spectacle to view!
Boston used to keep them private, but now
they'll roar for you.
Now they name 'em and they tame 'em, and
they shame 'em and they brand 'em,
And in spite of guttural dialect, a child can
understand 'em.
Here's a Panther with a Purpose and a
Problematic Tail.
And mark these neat poetic feet! An educated
Snail!

A Literary Zoo!
So really clever, too!
Ah, what ghostly authors shudder from the
shelves that once they knew!
In the alcoves that the sometime Literary
Lights invaded
Now the plagiaristic monkey thinks he does
as well as they did,
And the Unenlightened Publishers assemble
here to gaze
While the anaconda swallows indiscrimina-
ting praise!"

IN honour of the *Star's* tenth birthday, which will be celebrated on the 17th inst., Mr. Conan Doyle has written a story, entitled "The Confession," for which Mr. Marcus Stone has made illustrations. To find Mr. Marcus Stone again acting as illustrator carries the mind back to days long past.

MR. ANTHONY HOPE'S lecturing tour in America has been so successful that he is postponing his return. Meanwhile Mr. Marion Crawford is beginning a lecturing tour through the Southern and Middle States, which will occupy him until May. Another lecturer leaves our own shores for America in a few days—Mr. Le Gallienne.

THE following story of the late Lord Tennyson may or may not be true; but it is good enough, merely as a flight of pure fancy, to stand. In company with a few friends, says a correspondent of the *Telegraph*, the Post Laureate one day entered a public reading-room and sat down in a large arm-chair before the fire. Much to the amazement of the other occupants of the room, he then proceeded to elevate his feet until they rested on the chimney-piece in the fashion we are led to believe is "real American." No expostulations on the part of his friends respecting the inelegance of the position were of the slightest avail. Suddenly a brilliant inspiration seized one of them—the father of one of our leading actors of to-day. Going close to Lord Tennyson, he whispered in his ear, "Take your feet down, or they'll mistake you for Longfellow." In an instant the poet's boots were on the floor, and he assumed the ordinary position of an Englishman.

THE American *Bookman* for January gives its usual returns of the most popular books in the States. It is interesting to note that those fine novels, *The Choir Invisible* and *The Kentuckians*, are in high favour. The popularity of *Quo Vadis* with American readers is at last on the wane; but only, it would appear, after it has been read by an enormous section of the American reading public. The different appeals which this Polish author's novel has made to English and American readers is surely not a little curious and suggestive. We happen to know that the sale of *Quo Vadis* in this country has amounted to about 4,000 copies. Whereas in America 100,000 copies have been sold.

AMERICAN opinion of books often upsets that of England. In this country Mr. Blackmore's *Daniel* has not been reviewed

with the unction which some of his recent novels drew forth, nor is it by the average reader considered quite in his best manner. Yet America has offered it a very warm welcome. The *Boston Globe* says: "Like *Lorna Doone*, it is worth reading many times over, and the older it gets the more popular it is likely to become. The story is tremulous with human emotions, described as only a master can portray them." The *Chicago Tribune* says: "Every page must be read and savoured for itself. Every line shows a compression and a polish that makes it glitter and flash a new light from a new facet every time the mind turns it over." We are the more glad to find Mr. Blackmore's new story so popular in America, since we could not give it very high praise ourselves.

APROPPOS of difference of opinion, "A. E. T." writes: "The following from to-day's *Observer* is an amusing instance of that kind of summary criticism to which Browning once attributed the retardation of his own acceptance with the public:

'NEW POEMS. By Francis Thomson. (Constant).—A collection of verses of only mediocre pretensions. It is dedicated to the late Mr. Coventry Patmore, but the disciple lingers *longo intervallo* behind his revered master.'

It is not easy to conceive the class of reader for which guidance of this character is intended."

ANOTHER correspondent—Mr. C. Giffard—writes: "During my reading of the last *Weekly Sun*—a luminary in whose rays I frequently bask when the other is obscure—it seemed to rain cats and dogs. I may be wrong, but one of the latter looked something of a 'howler.' 'We hardly know whether to regard De la Motte Fouque's [without the accent] *Undine* (Macmillan & Co.) as an allegory pure and simple or as a fairy tale. . . . The author's literary style reaches a high level of excellence, and joy and pathos are artistically blended in the narrative.' Shades of *die Romantische Schule*!—but perhaps the *Weekly Sun* is only playing upon our press-cutting agencies."

Finance, the new weekly paper devoted to money matters, makes a very creditable appearance. It has everything handsome about it, from its deep-red cover to its headings and initials. A special feature of "No. 1, Vol. I," is a series of three articles, entitled "Other People's Opinions." These are contributed by Sir Edwin Arnold, Mr. Jerome K. Jerome, and Mr. I. Zangwill. Sir Edwin likes money; and will not hear it abused. He even blesses the millionaire:

"I should no more grudge his luxuries and splendours to such useful servants of the sublime History of Man than I should grudge to the upland lake its golden-spotted trout, its tranquillity, and the colours of heaven upon its elevated breast. *Allons! marchons!* then; Gentlemen of the High and Low Finance! with the varied and stupendous industries of your calling! Make money—*si possis, recte!* Start mighty enterprises! Establish companies! Exploit the earth, which is our leasehold estate! Pierce isthmuses! Tunnel under mountains! Bridge the baffled seas with swift-

keeled ships! If it be money, and the pursuit of money, which does all these things—so long as it does them honestly—I say let Finance 'be lawful as eating!'"

MR. JEROME, being, according to the latest biographical dictionary, "the founder of the New Humour," ascends the pulpit:

"You [the Financiers] have rewritten the laws: You shall live by the sweat of other men's brows. The earth is yours and the fulness thereof. You toil not neither do you spin (unless you call the fevered dice-thrower a 'toiler'), yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like you—nay, nor his wives either. You have prepared a new gospel for yourselves. How long do you think its statutes will stand?"

MR. ZANGWILL is less exclamatory and more argumentative than his coadjutors. He points out that, according to recent Biblical scholars, the notion that the Bible denounces usury and interest is founded on a misprint. Be this as it may:

"The Church has long since abandoned its objection to the breeding of money by money, and has even, I believe, investments of its own. But I cannot help thinking that the old ecclesiastical objection to money and financial operations still lingers on in a transformed shape in many modern minds equally narrow. These poetic or aristocratic spirits do not see that the international financiers are keeping the life-blood of the world circulating, and that the millennium of peace and brotherhood is more likely to come through the Bourses than through all the religions. The interest every population has in every other is a great pacificatory force when passions rage, and the profits may achieve what the prophets may have failed in. Not that this necessarily persuades us to do homage to the great god Per Cent. But it is for the philosopher to recognise the place of everything in life, and then—put it in its place. There is the Stock Exchange now, a much-abused institution in more senses than one. If people unite their capitals in big undertakings, there must be shares, and a medium for negotiating them. That this provides an opportunity for gamblers is an unfortunate consequence, but it can no more be helped than the unpleasantly-exaggerated velocity of that wind which normally moves our ships."

And, to be sure, it is his spare cash that a man spends on literature; and if he is to have spare cash, he must have much cash. We all stand or fall together.

THE New York *Life* seems to have been bewildering its readers almost to distraction with a literary puzzle. A prize of 100 dols. was offered to the lucky guesser of the line or lines by Longfellow illustrated by a picture of an old gentlemen in armour, riding, in front of his soldiers, over flowers strewn before him by women in mediæval costume. More than three-quarters of all the guesses sent in quoted lines from "The Belfry of Bruges" and "Coplas de Manrique." Nothing could have been more natural. And nothing could have been more absurd than to intend the picture to illustrate the line from "Morituri Salutamus":

"For age is opportunity, no less than youth itself."

If the number of guesses had been twelve

million, says the *Critic*, instead of twelve hundred, not one of them would have given this line. Nothing could be farther fetched.

Literary London: its Lights and Comedies, by Mr. W. P. Ryan, will be published by Mr. Leonard Smithers this month. The volume deals with most of the prominent authors and schools of the day, and contains articles and satires on such subjects as "The Great Young Man and the New Style of Literary History," "The New Doom of Narcissus," "The Devil and a Modern Knight-Errant," "A Lunar Elopement: the Key to Allen Gaunt's Defection," "The Passing of the Poets," "The Flight from the Paineyard."

LAST week we said a word on Mr. Conan Doyle as a poet. There is another popular prose writer who occasionally plays with verse, and does it sometimes exceedingly well. We refer to Mr. Barry Pain, the author of the satirical comments signed Tompkins in the *Chronicle* of a Saturday. Often they display merely a keen, if mordant, humour, an intimate knowledge of Cockney dialect, and a true sense of rhythm: but on Saturday last Mr. Pain, it seems to us, achieved something finer. In the following poem there is a certain uncommon grim force, which prevails in spite of the slang setting:

"AT MIDNIGHT."

" 'Ninety-sev'n,' the bell is syin', tollin', slow,
'Orf yer go,
'Arf-a-moment's all that's left yer—'arf-a-mo,
Doncher know?
'Arf-a-moment and you're dead,'
Says the big bell overhead,
'And 'Iteen-ninety-ite tikes on the show—
'Orf yer go.'
Do yer 'ear the bell a-callin', 'Ninety-ite,
Ninety-ite!
Tike the ribbons of the cheriot of fite
That won't wite
While the 'orses gallop fast
Through the midnight dawd an' vast,
Snatch the ribbons from the dead 'ands of
yer mite,
Ninety-ite!
Whort's ahead? The driver speaks not. All
is still,
Dark and chill.
And the 'orses gallop forrud with a will,
Darn the hill.
And the big bells as was swingin',
An' so jooberlantly ringin',
A myster'us silence keep;
And the world drops off ter sleep
As 'e drives us darn the steep.
Whort's ahead? Won't no one tell us—good
or ill? . . .
All is still."

RECENT rearrangements and additions in the South Kensington Museum include another Old English Room, which has been set up in the Western Arcade of the South Court by the side of the "Inlaid Room" from Sizergh Castle. The new specimen is from an old house, now pulled down, at Bromley-by-Bow, belonging to the early years of King James I. The spacious stone fireplace has over it an elaborate mantelpiece in oak with the Royal Arms very boldly carved. The ceiling bears in the

centre the same arms with the initials I.R., and is covered with fine strapwork ornament, having floral enrichments and medallions containing heads of ancient warriors. Specimens of furniture of the period have been taken from the museum and arranged in the room in order to give it a furnished aspect.

THE arrangement of two rooms in the Cross Gallery connecting the Indian Section and Science Collections has now been completed. The first room on descending the staircase is devoted, for the most part, to Cairene art. In the second room are textile fabrics and embroideries from various parts of the Turkish Empire. On the ground floor of the Indian Section an important addition has been made to the plaster casts by a collection of ornamental details from the palace of the great Akbar, at Fathpur Sikri, near Agra.

MR. VERNON BLACKBURN'S *The Fringe of an Art: Appreciations in Music*, will be published by the Unicorn Press on February 15. It will contain portraits of Mozart, Berlioz, Gounod, and Tchaikovsky. Mr. Blackburn is musical critic of the *Pall Mall Gazette*.

Sport in the Highlands of Kashmir, by Mr. H. Z. Darrah, is a new volume to be published almost immediately by Mr. Rowland Ward, of Piccadilly, London.

News from Paris states that Lieutenant Julien Viaud has a holiday from service, which—under his better-known name, Pierre Loti—he proposes to use in seeking material for a new book.

By permission of the Council of the Church House, four performances of the Rev. Henry Cresswell's ecclesiastical drama, "The Conversion of England," will take place in the Great Hall of the Church House, Westminster, on Saturday, January 15, at 2.30 p.m., and on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, January 17, 18, and 19, at 8 p.m.

MESSRS. SWAN SONNENSCHNEIN & Co. announce for early publication a translation of *L'Education à Port Royal*, being extracts from the writers of Port Royal, on the theory and practice of education, selected by the late M. Félix Cadet, Inspector-General of Public Instruction in France, with an introduction by the compiler.

The Life of Joseph Arch, M.P., edited, with a preface, by the Countess of Warwick, will be published immediately by Messrs. Hutchinson. Mr. Arch himself tells the story of his life, but Lady Warwick has prepared the book for publication, and has contributed a preface, in which she reviews at some length the history of the Union which Mr. Arch founded, and the position of the agricultural labourer at the present day. Mr. Arch is a Warwickshire man, and lives within a few miles of Warwick Castle.

THE ACADEMY'S AWARDS TO AUTHORS.

In reference to our intention to "crown" two books of signal merit published during 1897, we sent the following communication to certain men of letters who have been in touch with the literature of 1897:

"The proprietor of the ACADEMY having decided to set apart sums of One Hundred Guineas and Fifty Guineas as awards to the authors of books of signal merit published during 1897, the Editor asks your kind assistance in selecting the recipients. He will esteem it a favour if you will write on enclosed post-card the titles and authors of two or three books belonging to the period named, which are, in your opinion, most worthy of being 'crowned.'"

Below are a few of the replies already received. We shall announce our decision next week:

Mr. Andrew Lang suggests that the following books might be suitably "crowned":

The Song Book of Bethesda Hardacre. By Mrs. Fuller Maitland.

The King With Two Faces. By Miss M. E. Coleridge.

Admirals All. By Henry Newbolt.

Mr. Edmund Gosse writes:

Works by the forty members of your "Academy" being obviously excluded from consideration, my vote would be given thus:

One Hundred Guineas to Mr. Arthur Symons for his *Studies in Two Literatures*.

Fifty Guineas to Mr. Frederic G. Kenyon for his edition of *Bacchylides*.

[We have not restricted our awards in the way Mr. Gosse supposes.]

Mr. W. L. Courtney suggests:

The Diary of Master William Silence, by Chancellor D. H. Madden, as being the most illuminative bit of dramatic criticism which we have had for years, as well as the most definitive answer to the Baconian theory regarding Shakespeare's works. The novel I should suggest would be *The School for Saints*.

Mr. Hugh Chisholm, editor of the *St. James's Gazette*, makes the following suggestions: One hundred guineas to Mr. David Hannay for his *Short History of the Navy*; or, to Mr. William Ernest Henley for his "Burns."

Fifty guineas to Mr. Henry Newbolt for his *Admirals All*; or, to Mr. W. Alison Phillips for his *History of the Greek War of Independence*.

Mr. James Payn writes:

Among the best books of fiction published in 1897 are—by well-known authors:

The Tragedy of the Korosel.

In Kedar's Tents.

And by new-comers:

Many Cargoes.

Deborah of Tod's.

Mr. Clement K. Shorter writes:

Samuel Rawson Gardiner's *History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate, 1651-1654*.

William Butler Yeats's *The Secret Rose*.

Mr. I. Zangwill names the following books:

The Will to Believe. By Prof. William James.

What Maisie Knew. By Henry James.

The Nigger of the "Narcissus." By Joseph Conrad.

The Painters of Central Italy. By Bernhard Berenson.

Dr. W. Robertson Nicoll writes:

Mr. D. H. Fleming's *Mary Queen of Scots* deals with a theme of perennial interest; is derived direct from the sources; and no error has been pointed out by any critic so far as I know. It must always be considered and referred to by every student of the subject. I venture to think it belongs to the class of books the ACADEMY should honour.

Mr. W. Davenport Adams writes:—I should give my vote for:

The Memoir of Lord Tennyson.

The Coming of Love. By Theodore Watts-Dunton.

The School for Saints. By John Oliver Hobbes.

Admirals All. By Henry Newbolt.

Dr. Richard Garnett sends the following list of eligible books:

The Life and Letters of Benjamin Jowett. By Evelyn Abbott and Lewis Campbell.

Impressions of South Africa. By James Bryce.

The Hope of the World. By William Watson.

The Secret Rose. By W. B. Yeats.

Mr. H. G. Wells writes:

Henley & Henderson's edition of *Burns* is the sort of book that particularly deserves "crowning"—a magnificent performance of the utmost value to English literature, and not a very remunerative one to its authors. Mr. Henry James's *What Maisie Knew* ranks next, perhaps. *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"* is, to my mind, the most striking piece of imaginative work, in prose, this year has produced. *Captains Courageous* I couldn't read by reason of the illustrations; so I know nothing thereof.

REPUTATIONS RECONSIDERED.

III.—LORD TENNYSON.

It would be useless to deny that however noisy, vulgar, and impertinent may be the newspaper *post-mortem*, it is uniformly successful in laying bare the weaknesses of its subject. Enmity and scandal soon lose their power if there is no element of truth for them to work on. Lord Tennyson did not fully recognise this. He only saw that after death a man's reputation has to go through a grim and savage ordeal, as likely as not to "shrivel it up like a cabbage," and having hated publicity all his life, the greatest terror death held for him was that it would be no longer possible to fence off the prying journalist and the gossip-monger. "The newspapers will get hold of me at last," he exclaimed sorrowfully, when taken with his final illness. It is, therefore, with a sense of relief that we find his reputation emerging unsullied from the discussion to which his death and subsequent biography gave rise. Of other great men of the century, Scott alone passed through the ordeal as well. His popularity never received a check. From Carlyle downwards the rest of them have seemed to dwindle and recede as soon as life was out.

The parallel does not end here. Like Scott, Tennyson had no dark spot or mystery in his life to whet a vicious curiosity. His biography is that of a tranquil and refined English gentleman who, in early life, fixed his ambition on a certain object and resolutely pursued it. He has written no idyll more beautiful than the story of his own quest from the time when the wizard

"... found me at sunrise
Sleeping, and woke me
And learned me Magic,"

till that fine ending in which the ancient sage, gazing frankly and fearlessly over the very edge of life, finds the light of poetry shining even on the valley of the shadow of death:—

"And so to the land's
Last limit I came—
And can no longer,
But die rejoicing.
For thro' the Magic
Of Him the Mighty
Who taught me in childhood,
There on the border
Of boundless Ocean,
And all but in Heaven
Hovers the Gleam."

In any attempt to picture the troubled and yet splendid nineteenth century a conspicuous place must be given to his great and majestic figure, ever intent on his chosen art, and yet eagerly interested in every intellectual movement of the day; listening attentively to the voices that had anything to say, yet led by none from his own path; looking at life with his own eyes and reflecting it in his independent art. Something, too, of that golden atmosphere which constitutes the charm of his verse hovered about his personality. The glamour must have been great indeed that evoked not only the

respect but the warm and personal love of so many great minds, that bewitched Thackeray and Carlyle, Edward FitzGerald and Spedding, Mr. Gladstone, and the late Mr. Palgrave. Nor was his life altogether so sunny and enviable as to justify those who, like M. Taine, drew a sharp contrast between the opulent peer and the unfortunate race of bards whose lot too often is like that of Alfred de Musset in his garret or Burns at the plough-tail. On the contrary, he had crosses and tribulations enough to win our sympathy. Prosperity did not come till he had reached middle-age. For long enough he had to encounter public indifference and hostile criticism. "A barbarous people" were "blind to the magic and deaf to the melody." As he put it in homelier words, "the mass of Englishmen have as much notion of poetry as I have of fox-hunting." Yet this is not quite an accurate statement to make of a race that has produced an unequalled literature. Wordsworth was probably nearer the truth when he asserted that every great poet must educate and form his own audience. The disciple or imitator steps into a place ready-made for him; the original man has to overcome old prejudices and win adherents to his new convention. It was not till many years after Tennyson had produced some of his best work that he came to be generally recognised.

All this may be said, however, and a doubt still remain as to whether Tennyson is entitled to that high place in literature claimed for him by his contemporaries. In reading his son's biography, no one can help being struck with the indiscriminating character of their eulogy. Everything mentioned seems to be looked upon as a masterpiece by some person of authority. As often as not the result is to make one wonder how bad the criticism of a great writer may be. We are told that "Spedding, a first-rate Shakespearean scholar, George Henry Lewes, and George Eliot admired his plays." The last-mentioned wrote to Mr. Cross: "Tennyson's dramas are such as the world should be glad of—and would be if there had been no pre-judgment that he could not write a drama." A great deal more, and with deeper emphasis, has been written to the same effect. It can be very well understood when it comes from a great Shakespearean scholar. In drama alone did Tennyson allow himself to become an echo and no voice. It would be slaying the slain to insist upon the point. Time has gradually been sapping the work of those critics who used to enlarge upon his dramatic capacity, and it is apparent that here, at least, is failure. Nor was the failure accidental; it was the doom of his temperament. He had not that gift of imagining human beings acting under all conditions of light and shade that Shakespeare had to perfection, and that Scott among moderns possessed most highly. If we are to arrive at any true estimate of his work we must begin by flinging the plays overboard.

Again, we doubt if the popular "Idylls of the King" have any enduring quality, save it be in the case of the first and last of them, the rich and magnificent "Passing of Arthur."

Even at their first publication Mr. Ruskin, Edward FitzGerald, and many of the choicer minds, found something amiss. Their effect on the crowd was partly due to the strangeness and romance of the period in which they were set; but since then King Arthur and his knights have become familiar through numerous editions of Malory. It has become apparent to the dullest that Lord Tennyson fell below his model in so far as he tried to render the clash of arms and the romance characteristic of that old world, while his allegory sits badly on the characters, and is not sufficiently transparent for readers whose taste for this kind of writing has been formed on John Bunyan. Nor will his excellent style save the Idylls. There is nothing more changeable in literature than the fashion of narrative style. Let anyone who doubts it compare three translations of Homer, each of which seems to have fulfilled the requirements of its day—Chapman's, Pope's, and Butcher and Lang's *Odyssey*. Here the identical story is told, but how the language of each is varied to suit its generation! If it be true—as no doubt it is—that Lord Tennyson has refined the old stories till they lost life and colour, and that he has loaded them with a heavier moral than they can carry, then their endurance has but a feeble guarantee in a quality depending on the fickle caprices of taste.

But our poet is so opulent, that a great body of splendid work remains, even after the Plays and the Idylls have been laid aside. "In Memoriam" offers a surer foothold than either. Judged, not so much as a tribute to the memory of his dear and gifted friend Arthur Hallam, but as a book of elegies dealing with the elemental mysteries of life and the swaying of an utterly just and candid mind between faith and doubt, they reflect as nothing else does the spiritual struggles of his time; and the recognition of obstacles is so full, the inclination of his mind to the higher view so reasonable, that it wins the sympathy of all, the approval of a vast majority. No doubt, it is conceivable that the twentieth century may develop a different mood and a different attitude. On a lower plane, Lord Tennyson himself saw something of the kind happen to another poet. When he, a boy of fourteen, was carving "Byron is dead" on the sandstone rock at Somersby, the most acute minds of the time were convinced that Byron had vindicated his claim to a place beside Shakespeare. But the point of view was already beginning to shift. New streams of life and thought were breaking on the nineteenth century, and to the young generation Byron made no appeal. That this could be so did not dawn even on the clear mind of a Goethe. The mood of rebellion of which Byron was spokesman was not insular; it flushed the entire thought of Europe, and who could tell how fleeting and transient it was? Those of us who have found consolation and spiritual sustenance in the pages of "In Memoriam" cannot see any inherent defect that will make it of less comfort to those who are stricken with grief and doubt a hundred years hence; but we know that the thought of the moralist "waxeth old, as doth a

garment," and there are spiritual needs to which only a contemporary can minister. How much even of a Jeremy Taylor falls meaningless on ears that have listened to a Darwin and a Renan! Much there is in the elegies eternally true; but much, too, that may well prove transient.

As often happens, it was not in his most ambitious, but in his simpler work that the poet achieved his most indisputable success: in those little country idylls that he always spelt with one *l*; to distinguish them from the "Idylls of the King." The light did not lead him astray when it fell on

"Silent river,
Silvery willow,
Pasture and plowland,
Innocent maidens,
Garrulous children,
Homestead and harvest,
Reaper and gleaner,
And rough-ruddy faces,
Of lowly labour."

When Carlyle first read "The Grandmother" it is said that tears ran down his cheeks, and he could say nothing but "Poor old body! Poor old body!" It would be difficult to imagine a finer tribute to this wonderful picture of old age. But many of the other Lincolnshire pieces done at or before the same period are equally good: "The Northern Farmer," "Lookale Hall," "The May Queen," "The Brook" and "Dora." To mention the names is to point to literature that has passed into the life and being of England. It must not be thought, however, that I suggest that his charm depends on locality. On the contrary, it is at its highest, I consider, in "The Lotos Eaters," which for finish, melody, and consistency is second to no work that he has done, is scarcely second to anything of its kind anywhere.

And it is this inimitable charm—"the golden atmosphere," as Carlyle named it—that constitutes Tennyson's unique distinction. In his time the wells of romance that had been closed during the materialistic eighteenth century were re-opened. What the reader of to-day finds lacking not only in Pope and Dryden and Addison, but in Fielding, Defoe, Smollett, Johnson, and the rest, is the fulness of vision that sees a human action or a human character not only as a definite material fact, but as standing against a background of endless possibility, endless emotion, endless pathos. This is what Carlyle meant by his infinities, eternal verities, and so forth. He shook people out of their materialism, but going too far on the other side he drove them away from himself by over-emphasis and exaggeration. He did not realise, or could not apply, the truth finely expressed by Robert Browning, "nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh helps soul." Tennyson, on the other hand, was keenly alive to the nineteenth century awakening of spirit, but he was artist enough not to insist unduly upon it. One perceives that his mind was saturated with the feeling, but it is all suggested rather than expressed; it does not come out in set expression, but in fine, inexplicable charm. The quality is akin to what we find both in Homer and Shakespeare, but only it is modified and changed by modern ideas; it is the very poetry of to-day.

Quite as much as in the pieces we have mentioned this intensely modern note is felt in the little snatches of song scattered through his longer poems. They are not all equal. In Tennyson two natures are always contending for mastery, and the struggle does not invariably produce an equilibrium. There is the almost too gentle and sensitive spirit he inherited from his mother tempting him ever into sentimentality, as in his "Home they brought her warrior dead," a song that had a great vogue once, but already is worn threadbare. There is also the sterner and stronger temperament that came from his father, accounting for passages in "The Vision of Sin" which seem to suggest that there was in Tennyson the possibility of grimmer work. But this combination of tenderness and strength formed no bad equipment for a poet when the two were blended and working in equipoise. Even then an immortal song is produced only at a fortunate hour. We feel occasionally, as FitzGerald said of the "Princess" lyrics, that the foam is gone from the champagne. And they are like pictures: you must live with them a long time before being quite sure that they deserve adding to the world's list of masterpieces. I could not very well explain why "Blow, Bugle, Blow!" loses its savour while "Sweet and Low" retains it; why "Break, Break, Break" seems to gain and "Tears, Idle Tears" to lose in charm. The best songs are very few in number, and a slight apparent difference distinguishes the mortal from the immortal.

These lyrics are of a kind peculiarly modern, and such as have only been written by Tennyson and him "who sang to one clear harp on divers strings." The best of them are not love-lyrics in the old sense, but bits of philosophy set against this background to which allusion has already been made. In those of Goethe one finds a wider, clearer, colder outlook on the universe, but Tennyson's are suffused with deeper emotion. The imagination of the former is at its best when bringing the whole of existence within focus of a little song; that of the latter is rich in magic and illustration. Indeed, in that respect Tennyson is without a rival. Of many possible examples it will be sufficient to give one taken not from a song, but from the epilogue to "Tiresias," where he bewails the fact that "Old Fitz," to whom the poem was dedicated, was dead ere he received it. The passage has always appealed to me as illustrating what Prof. Palgrave called the "*mediocratas aurea*" of Tennyson:

"The tolling of his funeral bell
Broke on my Pagan Paradise,
And mixt the dream of classic times,
And all the phantoms of the dream,
With present grief, and made the rhymes
That missed his living welcome seem
Like would-be guests an hour too late,
Who down the highway, moving on
With easy laughter, find the gate
Is bolted and the Master gone."

It was by passages such as this, the exquisite lyric "To Sleep!" in "The Foresters," and "Crossing the Bar," that Lord Tennyson showed that his mind kept opening and growing to the very last.

There was a period when, unknown to himself, "the light retreated, the landscape darkened." All those secondary Lincolnshire studies, "The Northern Cobbler," "The Sisters," "The Village Wife," "The Spinster's Sweet-Arts," and "Sixty Years After," are written without the Tennysonian charm. He had in them lost touch of his atmosphere and his fancy. Yet the great work that accompanied them showed it to be only a temporary and accidental lapse. There is no one period of his life wherein his good work was done; it is sown all along his sixty years of labour. Without denying the very great merit of his other work, I think, however, that his strongest claim to immortality lies in the songs and the idyls with one.

At starting it was my intention to discuss at some length his treatment of nature, but I have outrun the constable in the matter of space; and, besides, another "reputation" will afford an opportunity to enter upon that subject.

MILLAIS AT BURLINGTON HOUSE.

SIR JOHN MILLAIS was young during the whole of the time when he was joyously passing through his phases, contemptuous of the phase just left behind, as a child of ten scorns his achievement at eight, or as any one of the growing centuries despised the work of its predecessor. The century just dying is old because it admires the past; and Millais ceased to be young when he—painting with an emancipated and triumphant hand—stopped to admire, because the world was resolved to admire, the intense, intent, and constrained work of 1849 and 1850. There seldom was so consistently changing, so intolerant, so honest, or so long a youth as his. In 1861, when he had begun to paint in what is called his second manner, he wished that he could but get his pre-Raphaelite pictures into his own altered hands, that he might tear them in pieces. It was a hearty wish. But he could not then buy them back to mend his reputation; and the owners (not yet very proud of their possessions—they no doubt called them "quaint") kept them until their day of popularity came at last. But though Millais got hold of none of his old pictures to destroy them, he borrowed all he could to repaint them. He did not spare his earlier work, having a vivacious and healthy dislike of it. That dislike might not be particularly healthy in others, but in him it was a sign of health and of life. Therefore, it is with mixed feelings that we see the proofs of an effectual *pentimento* in "The Vale of Rest." The nun who is sitting by while the lay-sister digs the grave received a new face; and something of the same kind may possibly have befallen the children in "Autumn Leaves." For the faces are exceedingly beautiful, whereas our fathers complained of the ugliness of these girls. The figures are primitive, but the faces—two of them, certainly—belong to the quickly altering period of "The Ransom" and "Trust Me." This, however, is not so certain an incident as that of the intolerant

refitting of the nun. Millais' nun, in fact, was like a solid doll mended with a new head.

As to this famous picture last-named, it is more than usually mingled work: it has one of the best skies in the whole collection, and the painting of the tree that stands against the lightest part of the after-sunset sky is beautiful; there is, as it were, lighted air between our eyes and these sprinkled leaves. In colour the upper part of the picture has beauty, but is the colour of the white head-dresses in the cool shadowless shadows of evening a beautiful study of white? It seems to our eyes greatly lacking in tenderness, delicacy, and sweetness, nor is there much mystery here in any colour. The execution, too, is painty. But the picture is an imaginative one and a sincere; it is the rather naïf work of a simple-minded working painter who is inspired by his literary friends. These nuns, by the way, seem to have by some means broken into an English Protestant churchyard full of an 1830 kind of gravestones, tablets for the express purpose of recording names and virtues—a "Low Church" churchyard in strongly English provincial taste, by a modern country town. Nuns lie under thin crosses, or without anything except their mounds, and do not wear their names even in the seclusion underground. "Ophelia" is the next picture of equal fame. It is six years' earlier work (1852) than "The Vale of Rest" as this was before the partial repainting. And surely an obvious help to the study of a painter who was all things, not by turn so much as by passage, would have been the chronological hanging of these collected pictures. No such order has been observed, but it has not been neglected for the sake of dodging the discords of colour, which occur here and there. The "Ophelia" has always been famous for the beauty of its flower-painting. A landscape, however, is not a flower-piece, and assuredly this rose-bush in flower is not a landscape-painter's work. The green leaves must have been painted in the studio, for no open-air leaves ever wore this green; but the equally open roses—a very equal republic of roses, all out—are most ambiguous. The painter has contrived to fill them—wherever painted—with rich light, but you must rifle them to find it; at any reasonable distance the wild rose-bush is quite dim and cold. It is much the same with the flowers in the hands of the floating figure; but what is really fine in the picture is the painting of the face. Here, and in "The Blind Girl," the full brush, the sweetness, and the essential and fundamental finish, have produced a surface far more like that of Velazquez than Millais' work when he set himself to do some Velazquez "on purpose." A little further on, the "Joan of Arc" helps us to decide what was Millais' perfectly dull time—it was about 1864, when the "Joan of Arc" was painted; and 1880—when the next picture, "Miss Alcyone Stepney," was painted—was a day of success claimed by every touch of an easy hand; some of the accessories—hair and lace especially—in this portrait are masterly. As for the "Black Brunswicker" (1860), it was painted when

the Primitive time was over and remembered with great uneasiness and shame, when the sentimentality of the painter expressed itself, free from the constraining inspiration of early friends, and when Millais became exceedingly popular. The parting of these rather uninteresting lovers divides the interest of the picture with the white satin dress, of which it seems strange, perhaps, to say that it is not beautifully painted, seeing that one is compelled to own that it is very like white satin.

To our mind the best picture of these few transitional years is "The Ransom" (1861). There are passages of this work that force us to call this particular transition a fine one; the hands, the hair of the children, all the surfaces of the garments in the middle and left of the picture, are not less than magnificent. The drama, indeed, is too obvious even for this obvious manner of painting incidents in suspense; the painter insists and insists that we shall see how the robbers are hesitating to take the knight's treasure because he betrays his anguish of desire to get his children back; but the action of one of the little girls with her arm stretched up over the father's mailed arm is more really dramatic than anything Millais achieved in the expression of attitude.

Among the chief early pictures are "Christ in the House of His Parents," "Autumn Leaves," and "Sir Isumbras at the Ford." The first is perhaps the principal and the most famous of Millais' Primitive or Pre-Raphaelite works. It has something more of affectation (to speak plainly) than is inevitable in work forced into the ways of other men and other times; the conception of the picture is excessively deliberate and self-conscious, and deliberate are also the actions of the figures; but the boy-Christ is an exquisite child, a figure in which simplicity wins; it is wonderfully painted, moreover.

"Autumn Leaves" is the work of a true colourist, and its sky, if not all that it ought to be, is fairly atmospheric, and has some beauty. This faint praise has to be denied to the utterly dull landscapes, from "Chill October" downwards, in which the skies have no life, no light, no intention, no unity, no movement, no repose. The truth should be told that Millais' skies are miserable. "Sir Isumbras" belongs to the Primitive period, and has strong beauties. Why, one wonders, did they in the middle-century smile at this "plum-coloured" horse? There is no visible plum-colour now, but a fair enough black. Was it not at the painting of this picture, by the way, that Mr. Ruskin, seeing the Primitive inspiration weakening, broke off finally in his praise of Millais, crying, "This is not a fall, but a catastrophe!" Three years earlier Mr. Ruskin himself had sat for the delicately beautiful portrait in the same room. The eyes of the young critic watching the young artist, through whom he so desired to paint his own will and his own way, must have been keen to descry decline in "Sir Isumbras"; but who shall say that it had not set in so soon as in 1857, seeing that seven more years landed Millais in the depth he had reached—undone, degraded,

undistinguished—when he painted the portrait of a child in the Water-colour Room—"Lily, Daughter of J. Noble, Esq."? Even the drawing—and Millais' drawing is generally excessively and subtly beautiful and searching—had fallen into wretched ruin in the face of this vulgarised child.

But, again, what a draughtsman was Millais, whenever the year was not 1864 or thereabouts! How his drawing turns, how it grasps and holds, lingers and finishes and chisels! And how beautiful it is! See "The Bishop of Manchester," the exquisitely drawn mouth of the John Bright portrait, and the well-constructed hands in a score of portraits. See, too, the portrait of Mr. Gladstone, which has masterly lines; and the head of Trelawney in the "North-West Passage." That quality of drawing, which had given to his primitive work a value nothing will ever lessen, did not forsake him again, when, in later life, he had recovered it.

And yet this later work has, in general, no cheering effect upon a Millais-lover, gathered thus as it is at Burlington House, in a mass. For the display and flagrancy of the portraits of fashionable middle-aged women Millais had not enough distinction of mind, enough style. He did not deal with them grandly. He had courage, but not a grand courage. He had not the gravity that can present an extravagant stout dress with dignity; and he painted extravagant stout dresses on defiant women by the score.

In "Hearts are Trumps" the heads are admirably painted, and full of essential life; the picture is one of Millais' masterpieces, and yet "is it style"? A grasp at style is made in the large gray silk dresses—a resolute grasp. Well, in the heads it is attained; but there is something lacking in all the deliberate rush of labour with which that silk is executed. We grow tired of it under the table. A great painter would not have wearied us with it even there. Then there are the landscapes—it is impossible not to refer to them again. They are not only ugly, but insipid; and there is hardly any possible covering of the same space of wall that one would not rather look at than "Dew-drenched Furze," for example.

Perhaps the greater number of the portraits of men painted in late years are Millais' finest work. They have not more dignity than nature, but they have extraordinary power, character, freedom, knowledge, security, and ease, and if not intellect, a most uncommon intelligence. Next to these is the beauty, here and there, of a child's hair and flesh painted with the freshness he loved; for, having painted many things, he owned that he rested upon one thing with unaltered delight—the mingled colour in the middle of a child's or a woman's cheek.

THE BOOK MARKET.

BOOK SALES OF 1897.

THE end of a year is as much a time for retrospection as it is for a natural indulgence in hope for the year to come. Even for the book-collector or the bookseller this is true; and so, on the eve of a new year, let us see what the year that has just gone has done for either of these speculators in the world of letters. A satisfactory consideration of this subject would demand the inclusion not only of the regular auction sales, but of all the catalogues of the chief booksellers; and as this is practically impossible, let us restrict ourselves to the more important public sales, and let us see what conclusions are to be drawn from them.

At once we are met with a sale for which the year 1897 must always remain distinguished—the Ashburnham Sale. So far, only two portions of the late Earl's magnificent library have been disposed. But those two portions are in themselves sufficient to establish an event in the annals of bibliomania. Eight days in June and July and six days in December sufficed to distribute some thousands of lots, which realised the enormous sum of nearly £50,000—a sum which must represent a substantial advance on the price paid for the books originally. No doubt the volumes were in good condition, and the library was one of the few private libraries in the country which was held in high esteem by those who can judge of what rare books are. But these considerations are not in themselves sufficient to account for the almost phenomenal sums paid. We can but surmise that our American cousins, infatuated with a desire to possess Ashburnham books, must have given commissioners *carte blanche*. Only by such an explanation can we understand the giving of £1,050 for a "Biblia Pauperum," which fetched £36 15s. the last time it was sold; or £147 for a pamphlet of nine leaves from the press of Machlinia; or £106 for an imperfect copy of the first edition of Shelton's translation of "Don Quixote"; or £81 for Gawin Douglas's "Palis of Honour"; or £390 for Laudonnière's "Foure Voyages unto Florida"; or £2,100 for Le Fevre's "Lyf of Jason" (Caxton, c. 1477)—the very copy for which Payne the bookseller gave £87 at Heber's sale; or £760 for "Les Prophecies de Merlin," even though it be bound by Le Monnier; or £41 for a six-leaved tract containing a "metrical declaration of the Paternoster." The truth is, such prices represent the final stage of the bibliomaniac, and may, in no sense, be taken as market prices. It may almost be prophesied that these books when next they come "under the hammer" will find a much soberer reception than they received at Messrs. Sotheby's rooms this year.

It is when we come to examine such sales as those of the libraries of Beresford R. Hope, Esq., Hon. Ashley Ponsonby (the Beesborough Collection), Sir Cecil Derville, H. W. Bruton, Esq., M. C. Scott, Esq., and J. J. Farquharson, Esq., that we arrive at material which should help us to legitimate conclusions. Not that these were

ordinary collections; by no means. But they were treated with a calm judgment and a business-like attention, which is the rule. Sensation is the exception; and if sensation form good "copy" for the reporter, it must be avoided when we require a guide as to the future. The Beasborough Collection contained a fine assortment of extra-illustrated books, and these fetched good prices. The Bruton Library consisted wholly of books and illustrations referring to Cruikshank, and the prices were by no means insignificant. Mr. Scott's library was rich in Australasian books, and particularly in Tasmanian newspapers; and for such there is always a good demand. Other libraries included some fine specimens of eighteenth-century French works illustrated by such famous book illustrators as Eisen, Moreau, Marillier, and Cochin; many very rare early gardening book; and a few of the scarcer first editions of works illustrated by William Blake. To appreciate properly the prices paid for the illustrated editions of such works as Dorat's "Fables Nouvelles" (£30 and £72); Dorat's "Les Baisers" (£20 10s. and £55 13s.); La Fontaine's "Contes et Nouvelles" (£16 10s., £31, and £51); Montesquieu's "Le Temple de Gnide" (£18 10s. and £46); Le Sage's "Le Diable Boiteux" (£31); "Daphnis et Chloe" (£35 10s. and £41); and Erasmus's "L'Eloge de la Folie" (£22 10s.), we must remember that the illustrations, which form the real value of these works, are in the finest "states." Fine impressions of the plates and fine condition of the books make the collector's heart to expand—it is not long before his purse opens. That early gardening books fetch such high prices is to be explained on the ground of their great rarity. Most of them, we notice, were bought either by Mr. Zaehnsdorf or Mr. Quaritch. Here are a few: "Ein Blumenbuch" (1616), £25 10s.; Hill's "Gardener's Labyrinth" (1586), £10; Alamanni's "La Coltivazione," £14; "Flower Garden Displayed" (1734), £13 15s.

However much the market may fluctuate with regard to Continental books or temporary fads, or privately printed works, the Englishman is always true to his own. Thus it is that the rare editions of English classics are always sure to fetch good prices. And thus it is that good sporting books, provided they are rare, of course, always are certain of respectful attention.

Shakespeare and Milton, Defoe and Sterne, Goldsmith and Johnson, Burns and Byron, Shelley and Keats are names to conjure with when first editions are about. Then it not a matter for surprise when we see the "Merchant of Venice" bring £315; "Paradise Lost," £80; "Lycidas," £60; "Robinson Crusoe," £45 10s.; "Moll Flanders," £10 15s.; "Sentimental Journey," £22; "Tristram Shandy," £20 10s.; "Haunch of Venison," £35; "Vicar of Wakefield," £60; "Poems" (Kilmarnock), £80 and £86; "St. Irvyne," £16 10s.; and "Zastrozzi," £15 15s.

That great sporting artist, Henry Alken, seems destined to remain at the head of his class. His "Angling Sports," "Sporting Ideas," and "National Sports," which realised £9, £18 10s., and £30, always

maintain a good average. The Badminton Library "large papers" are still in vogue, and the volumes on "Hunting" and "Shooting" still command many times their original prices. This year a copy of the former brought £30 and a copy of the latter £15.

But early books are things of the past. What may we collect of the things of the present, to judge from the sales of this bygone year? Undoubtedly, first editions of Mr. Kipling, and possibly of Robert Louis Stevenson. We are not quite sure of the latter, although his juvenile writings are realising ridiculous sums: "Pentland Rising" (£13); "Familiar Epistles" 1896 (£3 18s.); Edinburgh University Magazine for 1871 (£11 5s.); "On the Thermal Influence of Forests" (£14). Mr. Kipling's works, however, are bringing in more and more as the months go by. Two years ago we could purchase, at any bookseller who had a copy of it, his "Departmental Ditties" for £5; now the auctioneer obtains £16 from a bookseller. The magazine "Quartette" continues to be much sought for, and lately was sold for £12. Even the shilling Allahabad editions of his short stories now command £1, £2, and even £2 6s.

From all that we have recorded and discussed, it is easy to see that the rage for rare books is by no means soothed. The passion to have what others have not is as strong, if not stronger, now than ever it was. But if we are to indulge our passions, let us, at any rate, consider carefully before the fit seizes us. And let us, if we are lovers of good literature, buy the first editions of the classical writers; if we are sporting men, let us collect the illustrated works of Alken and others, especially those with coloured illustrations; if we are amateurs—using that word in its best sense—let us acquire good states of the illustrations of French eighteenth century masters; if we are millionaires, let us go in for *incunabula*, *Hore*, and hand-painted and illuminated Missals. Otherwise we shall have much, but shall have gained little. Let us also think of early-printed books with woodcuts, for of a surety these will remain worth their price. But let us never buy extra-illustrated books without examining the illustrations; and, above all, let us never extra-illustrate books ourselves, unless we have not only the elixir of life, but the philosopher's stone as well. Satisfied we never shall be, even though we be as wise as Solon, or as rich as Croesus, or as patient as Diogenes. Life is too short for this labour. Far better to attempt the "higher faking" of a Walton's "Angler." That, at any rate, can have an end.

T. S.

THE BITTER CRY OF A SECOND-HAND BOOKSELLER.

THE preceding article will give little pleasure to a certain London second-hand bookseller, of good standing, who expressed himself very freely the other day to an ACADEMY representative. The subject of the conversation was the state of the

second-hand book trade. Said the book-seller sadly: "It is miserable compared with what it was twenty years ago."

"How do you account for the decline you speak of?"

"There are many causes; but the greatest to my mind is the publication of the prices of books, current in the sale rooms, in annual volumes. There are two such volumes, as you know."

"Will you explain?"

"Certainly. Here am I, a second-hand bookseller; my success depends largely on my inner knowledge of the values of books, just as a furrier's knowledge depends on his knowledge of the values of furs. But whereas the furrier is able to keep his knowledge to himself, mine is all printed in a book and distributed to the public. Naturally a great part of my knowledge has been picked up by constant attendance at the sale rooms, which means time, which means money; and by speculations and experiments, which also mean money. Then comes a 'chiel amang us, takin' notes.' Yes, and 'faith, he'll prent it.' Now, these annual volumes of current book prices are easily compiled. A clerk at fifteen shillings a week could take down the prices from the lips of the last bidder. It is easily done. But what is the effect? My secrets become everybody's. My knowledge is imparted to my customers. Is this the case in any other business? I don't want to charge an unfair price for a book, but I do want to fix its price myself. And I say that unless I am allowed to do this elementary thing I cannot prosper. Another thing: these publications send my customers direct to the sale rooms."

"Where, however, you can 'run prices up.'"

"Yes; but there's no satisfaction in that. The multiplication of private bidders necessarily spoils trade."

"Have you thought of a remedy?"

"The remedy is plain, but I fear we shall never get it. It is cohesion among second-hand booksellers."

"Is there none now?"

"None whatever."

"Well, suppose you cohere; what next?"

"Then we should publish our own 'book prices' at 2s. a copy, and limit its circulation strictly to the trade. That would kill the existing publications."

"But would it?"

"Oh, yes. They thrive now mainly on booksellers, who foolishly allow private bidders to consult these works. The private bidders are not numerous enough of themselves to support such expensive works."

"I see. Then your point is that there are enough private bidders and too-knowing customers to spoil business, but not so many that you could not defeat them by the plan you suggest."

"That is my point."

"And you really consider, not as a matter of inference only, but as a matter of shop experience, that the publication of current book prices is hurtful to your trade?"

"It is ruining it."

THE WEEK.

PUBLISHING is languid, after the holidays, and the arrivals are very miscellaneous. With the issue of *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion* in their series of "Standard Novels," Messrs. Macmillan complete their edition of Jane Austen's novels. Mr. Austin Dobson has contributed an introduction to each volume, and none better than the one which we find here. The peculiar fate which overtook the MS. of Miss Austen's earliest effort is narrated by Mr. Dobson as follows:

"Even at this distance of time, the genuine devotee of Jane Austen must be conscious of a futile, but irresistible, desire to 'feel the bumps' of that Boetian bookseller of Bath who—having bought the MS. of *Northanger Abbey* for the base price of ten pounds—refrained from putting it before the world. What can have been the phrenological conditions of a man who could remain insensible to such a sentence as this, the third in the book: 'Her father was a clergyman, without being neglected, or poor, and a very respectable man, though his name was Richard—and he had never been handsome.' That the sentence was an afterthought in the proof cannot be contended, for *Northanger Abbey* was published posthumously, and 'the curious eyes, that saw the manner in the face,' had long been closed under a black slab in Winchester Cathedral. Only two suppositions are possible—one, that Mr. Bull, of the Circulating Library at Bath (if Mr. Bull it were) was constitutionally insensible to the charms of that master-spell which Mrs. Slipslop calls 'ironing'; the other, that he was an impenitent and irreclaimable adherent of the author of the *Mysteries of Udolpho*. The latter is the more natural conclusion. Nothing else can explain his suppression for so long a period of Miss Austen's 'copy'—the scene of which, by the way, was largely laid in Bath itself. He was infatuated with Mrs. Radcliffe, and Mrs. Radcliffe's following: the *Necromancer of the Black Forest*, the *Orphan of the Rhine*, the *Midnight Bell*, the *Castle of Wolfenbach*, and all the rest of those worshipful mas'erpieces which Isabella Thorpe, in chap. vi., proposes for the d-lectionation of Catherine Morland, and the general note of which Crabbe (one remembers Miss Austen's leaning to that favourite poet) anticipates so aptly in *The Library*:

'Hence ye profane! I feel a former dread,
A thousand visions float around my head:
Hark! hollow blasts through empty courts
resound,
And shadowy forms with staring eyes stalk
round.'
But whatever be the solution, the fact remains."

THERE comes to hand a volume of more or less humorous verse by "Ironquill," selected and arranged by J. A. Hammerton. Who is "Ironquill"? Here is part of the answer furnished by Mr. Hammerton:

"The name of 'Ironquill,' though known to fame in America, and familiar as a household word in the Transmissouri, has yet to gain in Great Britain that reputation it has so deservedly won beyond the Western wave. . . . Most Americans who know 'Ironquill' know that he is none other than the Honourable Eugene F. Ware, of Topeka, Kansas, who, to use the words of Dr. John Clark Ridpath, the historian, 'as a publicist and man of affairs, is second to none of the leaders of that great commonwealth.'"

Mr. Ware is an eminent attorney, and the verses are the fruitful occupation of his leisure."

"Ironquill" is now introduced to English readers as the typical poetic product of Kansas. The verses in this volume are very various. Here are two stanzas from "The Flopper":

"Bill was a combination of despondency and hope;
At times he grew gregarious, at times he used to mope.
There wasn't any office that he thought he couldn't fill;
He looked at each new ism, and embraced it with a will.

He entered all new parties. He pioneered new creeds.
He ran for sheriff, then he flopped to register of deeds.
And then he tried for probate judge—but none of it would work;
He tried to be a minister, then flopped to postal clerk.

"Ironquill's" Americanisms of style and spelling have been retained throughout the book.

MR. R. FARQUHARSON SHARP'S *Dictionary of English Authors* is biographical and bibliographical. "In the case of each author the essential facts in his career are stated as briefly as is practicable, followed by as complete as possible a list of the first editions of his works, arranged chronologically."

A *Bibliography of British Municipal History* has been compiled by Mr. Charles Gross, assistant Professor of History at Harvard University. Incidentally, the author states that "the British Museum has the largest collection of works relating to municipal history, including many valuable MSS.," but he adds that it does not possess more than three-quarters of the whole body of topographical books relating to Great Britain. Mr. Gross's volume runs to more than 450 large octavo pages.

A NEW "Double Section" of the *New English Dictionary* is issued by the Clarendon Press. It has been compiled by Mr. Henry Bradley, and embraces Frank-Law—Fyz, and G—Gain-coming.

NEW BOOKS RECEIVED.

THEOLOGICAL AND BIBLICAL.

- THE NEW TESTAMENT OF JESUS; OR, THEISTS' COMPILATION OF SELECTED PASSAGES. Williams & Norgate.
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PETER THE GREAT.

WHEN Sir Henry Irving intimated, a few months ago, that he intended to produce a play by his younger son, Laurence Irving, on the subject of Peter the Great, there was no undue surprise expressed in any quarter, because the young author in one or two fugitive and experimental pieces had certainly manifested a dramatic talent above the average and beyond his years. On other grounds the production of "Peter the Great" at the Lyceum on Saturday night aroused exceptional interest. It is a remark frequently heard in theatrical circles that Sir Henry Irving has done much for the

drama but little for dramatists—indeed, the Lyceum “chief,” as he is familiarly called by his subordinates, made a playful allusion to this very saying when he announced the acceptance of his son’s play. Whether a more enterprising policy like that pursued by Mr. George Alexander and Mr. Beerbohm Tree would not have proved equally advantageous at the Lyceum there is, of course, no knowing. But it is a curious fact that on the rare occasions when Sir Henry Irving has left the safe ground of classic drama or of well established French adaptation, like “The Bells,” “The Lyons Mail,” or “Louis XI,” he has not been too happily inspired; and, possibly, the reception accorded to “Peter the Great” will check, rather than encourage, his patronage of contemporary writers. For it is to be feared that this ambitious effort on the part of a very young author will not repay the expense and the histrionic talent expended upon it at the Lyceum in so unstinted a measure.

SCENICALLY, “Peter the Great” ranks with any of Sir Henry Irving’s great productions, and it employs the entire *personnel* of the Lyceum, including not only “the chief” himself, but Miss Ellen Terry, although the part of Catherine, for which she is cast, is a purely episodic one. Never, indeed, has a young author had a more magnificent opportunity for distinction opened up to him. But opportunity is one thing and the ability to grasp it another. I am not sure that the very wealth of illustration brought to bear upon young Mr. Irving’s tragedy does not tend by contrast to accentuate its weakness. The picture might have appeared to more advantage had it been enclosed in a less gorgeous and less massive frame. Similarly, the author’s talent might have proved more effective had it been applied to a subject less ponderous and intractable than the character of the enigmatical Tsar, at once a bloodthirsty savage, a monster of cruelty, an enlightened patron of the sciences, and a great empire builder. The truth is, that the youthful author of “Peter the Great” has confidently stepped in where dramatists of more experience have feared to tread. The life of Peter the Great has never been successfully placed upon the stage except with the softening accompaniment of music. It is too harsh, brutal, inexplicable for the purposes of drama, unless, indeed, the lines of history are widely departed from.

MR. LAURENCE IRVING has sought, I imagine, to show us the Tsar on his terrible side. Peter fumes and scowls and bellows at his terrified courtiers, who huddle together at his approach like sheep. He throttles this knavish poltroon and that, orders off another to be married against his will, or whittles away placidly at his ship-building models, while groans and agonised cries proceed from the torture chamber where evidence is being manufactured to his orders. All this is, theoretically, very awe-inspiring, and yet, somehow, despite Sir Henry Irving’s untiring exertions in the part, one does not feel this monster in human shape to be so very terrible after

all. His bark is worse than his bite. In fact, one has a suspicion that this imperial Bogey-man is merely pretending, like the ghost which terrifies children until the white sheet is pulled off its face. He is far too noisy, restless, changeable, to be the strong man that the dramatist would have us believe. The harder Sir Henry Irving toils at the part the less convincing this too turbulent Peter becomes. He veers about like a reed shaken by the wind,

“One foot on sea and one on shore,
To one thing constant never.”

This is not how force of character is shown. Whether such a personage as the Peter of history—madman and statesman of genius—could be adequately enacted is, perhaps, open to doubt. The experiment has never, I believe, been made, albeit the subject must often have presented itself to the mind of the practical dramatist. There are great natural forces that defy the art of the stage, such as a moving railway train, and commanding personalities like those of Napoleon and Peter the Great. In this instance the Peter of the play stands to the Peter of history in pretty much the same relation as the cardboard simulacrum to the railway train of the workaday world.

WITH true instinct Mr. Laurence Irving has taken the death of Peter’s ill-starred son Alexis as the knot of his story—an event which history has left obscure. That the prince died in prison, into which he had been flung by his father’s orders, is certain; but whether from natural causes, by misadventure, or by the Tsar’s decree, is unknown. The author fills up the gap left by the historian. In his view, Peter’s great ambition is that his successor should be able worthily to carry on his great scheme of empire-building. Accordingly, with doating fondness, the Tsar applies himself to the task of educating the youth so as to fit him for his great position. But Alexis, wrapped up in a worthless woman, has no stomach for education of any kind. Nor does he aspire to rule Russia. In fact, he is a white-faced poltroon of the most contemptible description. The Tsar sees his duty before him. Alexis, who had fled to Italy with his mistress, is brought back, tried on the charge of treason, and condemned to death. It remains for the Tsar to sign the fatal decree. Shall he do it? In the interests of the State, which he places before those of humanity, he takes his dread resolution. There is a final scene, at first of recrimination, but ultimately of reconciliation, between father and son. They arrive almost at the point of understanding each other. But Alexis prefers death to life, and the Tsar is not unwilling that he should pass into the hands of the executioner, whose weapon is poison. And so the *dénouement* comes, the Tsar feeling his son’s untimely end all the more acutely that the young man has in his last moments betrayed an unexpected fortitude.

EVIDENTLY it was for this idea that the play was written, and these closing scenes, in point of fact, are the best that the author

has given us. For once the play rises to the appropriate tragic plane, and here, too, Sir Henry Irving, as Peter, obtains his finest effects. From being an unspeakable monster of cruelty, Peter becomes noble with the nobility of *Virginus*, and in the interests of the State slays his son virtually with his own hand, as the Roman father slew his daughter in order to protect her honour. If the play had all been couched in this elevated vein it would have been a much more satisfactory work. The author, however, wastes valuable time in leading up to his *dénouement*; he has neglected to provide a sufficiency of illustrative action; three-fourths of a portentously long cast are mere lay figures (albeit one or two of them are ecclesiastics), and the whole is rendered in a curiously flippant and trivial vein of dialogue—the opposite extreme to the “staginess” of convention. A lay figure the great Catherine herself would be in the hands of an actress of less verve and emotional power than Miss Ellen Terry. Perhaps the one consistent and proportionate character of the play is the Alexis of Mr. Taber, an American recruit to the company. His sketch of the feeble-spirited youth is one that lives in the memory. Sir Henry Irving’s physical exertions in the part of Peter require a word of acknowledgment. I have never known him work with more zeal and sincerity.

J. F. N.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE AUTHOR’S FIGURES.

SIR,—It is a common way out of a mess to prove your adversary making a small error of detail.

1. Mr. Nutt first declared solemnly that the “least” number of pages for a six-shilling book was 388. It was not, as he now calls it, an “assumption,” but a plain, naked assertion. Not the average, mind. The “least”—on this assertion he piled up his figures.

2. I showed by five examples that he was wrong.

3. He says that two of these examples are 3s. 6d. books.

4. Very well. I am out of the reach of the books. Let it be so. Three remain. How can 388 pages be the “least” allowed when three of the most popular of modern novels contain far less? Down go all his figures.

That is the whole thing. I showed, however, that on other points his letter was quite wrong, because I had allowed for everything. He tries to get out by asking if £14 is all that is spent on advertising a Barrie. A Barrie, indeed! The book before me was one which no one would produce except at the author’s cost. I can assure your readers that not £14 but £5 is nearer the mark in such a book as this.

Mr. Heinemann’s letter gives me great pleasure, for it shows—what, indeed, I knew before—that he loves the *Author* as much as he loves the literary agent, and for the same reason. He has, indeed, on

other occasions shown his love of both. Lastly, however, Mr. Nutt should not contradict himself. In the same paragraph he says, first, that he has not seen more than two numbers of the *Author* in his life; and, next, that a certain statement, which he would find it difficult to quote from the *Author*, has been repeated without a word of qualification. If he does not see the paper, how does he know?

WALTER BESANT.

Bath, Jan. 3, 1898.

MATHILDE BLIND'S POETRY.

SIR,—I think that your review of *A Selection from the Poems of Mathilde Blind*, in your issue of December 26, must have pained and surprised those of your readers who have read Mathilde Blind's poems with care and sympathy. Your reviewer expends his pity on her "well nigh fruitless effort to become a poet." Her productions are "slenderly meritorious." She "has little or no imaginative insight, no creative, and little interpretative power." Well, I disagree with these judgments. It so happens that I know Mathilde Blind's verse only through the volume on which your reviewer bases his remarks, and it has affected me very differently. May I jot down a few comments and quotations, in haste and at random? Your reviewer thinks that Mathilde Blind has no creative power; I think she has it: witness the figure of Sam in "The Teamster." Here are the first four stanzas of a poem which your reviewer thinks is a "dull and conscientious study":

"With slow and slouching gait Sam leads the team;
He stoops i' the shoulders, worn with work not years;
One only passion has he, it would seem—
The passion for the horses which he rears:
He names them as one would some household pet,
May, Violet.

He thinks them quite as sensible as men;
As nice as women, but not near so skittish;
He fondles, cossets, scolds them now and then,

Nay, gravely talks as if they knew good British:
You hear him call from dawn to set of sun,
'Goo back! Coom on!'

Sam never seems depressed nor yet elate,
Like Nature's self he goes his punctual round;
On Sundays, smoking by his garden gate,
For hours he'll stand, with eyes upon the ground,
Like some tired cart-horse in a field alone,
And still as stone.

Yet, how's ever stolid he may seem,
Sam has his tragic background, weird and wild
Like some adventure in a drunkard's dream.
Impossible, you'd swear, for one so mild:
Yet village gossips dawdling o'er their ale
Still tell the tale."

This is vivid and loving portraiture. Mathilde Blind could see things and make them be seen by her readers. Take this little Millet landscape:

"Sun-tanned men and women, toiling there together;
Seven I count in all, in yon field of wheat,

When the rich ripe ears in the harvest weather
Glow an orange gold through the sweltering heat.

Busy life is still, sunk in brooding leisure;
Birds have hushed their singing in the hushed tree tops;
Not a single cloud mars the flawless azure;
Not a shadow moves o'er the moveless crops.

In the glassy shallows, that no breath is creasing,
Chestnut-coloured cows in the rushes dank
Stand like cows of bronze, save when they flick the teasing
Flies with switch of tail from each quivering flank.

Nature takes a rest—even her bees are sleeping,
And the silent wood seems a church that's shut;
But these human creatures cease not from their reaping
While the corn stands high, waiting to be out."

This is truly felt, and sweetly set down; it is not great poetry, but it is not "dull," it is not unimaginative, it is more than "slenderly meritorious." Your reviewer's criticism of "The Street Children's Dance" does not seem to me quite fair. He says that "the subject of the poem is not even touched until the fifteenth stanza is reached." But the children are introduced in the seventh stanza, and are not again lost sight of for a moment. The poem is reflective, and will be seen to be such at once by the discerning reader. Your reviewer might have complained with justice that its title does not strictly answer to its contents. But Mathilde Blind need only have called her stanzas "Lines Suggested by Street Children Dancing" to have anticipated his criticism.

Your reviewer seems to ignore Mathilde Blind's wonderful human pity. Yet this is so pure, profound, and constant as to be itself poetry. She loved "all things both great and small" with a sad, deep love. She remembered the lowly and humble men of heart; and longed that all feeble things should know something of the glory of life. Who but she would have given that turn, in the sextet, to her sonnet, "The Red Sunsets, 1883"?

"The twilight heavens are flushed with gathering light,
And o'er wet roofs and huddling streets below
Hang with a strange Apocalyptic glow
On the black fringes of the wintry night.
Such bursts of glory may have rapt the sight
Of him to whom on Patmos long ago
The visionary angel came to show
That heavenly city built of chrysolite.

And lo, three factory hands begrimed with soot,
Aflame with the red splendour, marvelling stand,
And gaze with lifted faces awed and mute,
Starved of earth's beauty by Man's grudging hand,
O toilers, robbed of labour's golden fruit,
Ye, too, may feast in Nature's fairyland."

Note, again, how in trying to express her

own intimate love for another soul she accumulates tenderly observed images:

"As opiate to the sick on wakeful nights,
As light to flowers, as flowers to poor men's rooms,
As to the fisher when the tempest glooms
The cheerful twinkling of his village lights;
As emerald isles to flagging swallow flights,
As roses garlanding with tendrilled blooms
The unweeded hillocks of forgotten tombs,
As singing birds on cypress-shadowed heights,
Thou art to me. . . ."

I think with Mr. Arthur Symonds, who edits the *Selection*, that Mathilde Blind "was a poet, almost in spite of herself." Let me, in conclusion, quote her sonnet "Nirvana," in which she seems to say her last word:

"Divest thyself, O Soul, of vain desire!
Bid hope farewell, dismiss all coward fears;
Take leave of empty laughter, emptier tears,
And quench, for ever quench, the wasting fire
Wherein this heart, as in a funeral pyre,
Aye burns, yet is consumed not. Years on years
Moaning with memories in thy maddened cars—
Let at thy word, like reflux waves, retire.

Enter thy soul's vast realm as Sovereign Lord,
And, like that angel with the flaming sword,
Wave off life's clinging hands. Then chains will fall
From the poor slave of self's hard tyranny—
And Thou, a ripple rounded by the sea,
In rapture lost be lapped within the All."

Put Mathilde Blind's case as you will, she cannot be dismissed as a woman who went to Parnassus on a vain errand. Her poetry has much grace; it is charged with emotion; and it is so sincere as to be a relic of her living self. J.

CRITICS.

SIR,—Will Mr. J. E. Yerbury allow me to ask him if he has ever read *Daniel Rochate* and *Rabagas*? Has he not simply opened a catalogue of Victorien Sardou's complete works and chosen two of the least known, which he is pleased to give us as models of criticism? His choice is hopelessly unhappy.

If, as Mr. Yerbury claims, I have "a very limited conception of what a critic really is," he, at least, has a very large conception indeed. For Mr. Yerbury every writer—the journalist, the philosopher, the satirist, the man who as novelist gives his opinion on any subject, the author of what French people call "la pièce à thèse"—is a critic. This at least appears from his statement that *Daniel Rochate* and *Rabagas* are "perfect specimens of criticism."

Would the readers of the *ACADEMY* bestow on Messrs. Hardy and Grant Allen (I beg pardon for this juxtaposition) the title of critic when these authors speak of free love? Why, then, should Sardou have a greater right to be so called for having set forth in *Daniel Rochate* the struggle between Atheism and Christianity anent the question of civil and religious marriage; for having given us in *Rabagas*—which, after all, is but a poor pamphlet—an overdrawn witless caricature of a republican? No matter! Hats off, gentlemen! Long life to Victorien

Sardou, the great French critic! Would Mr. Yerbury kindly tell me in what paper I can find, "at least twice a week, criticisms of men and things from the pen of Sully-Prudhomme"? a philosophical poet whom I greatly admire. I should be very thankful, I am sure!

For the articles of François Coppée three numbers of *Le Journal*, kept by mere chance, I assure you will give us a good example of his weekly collaboration. On July 1 Coppée writes on the Jubilee; on October 28 he tells us of a winter sunset at Geneva, "above the clouds"; finally, on November 25, he relates at length that on a Sunday morning at church he saw a poor girl praying fervently.

But Mr. Yerbury is quite right. Coppée is sometimes a critic, and this is how he comes to be so. A young writer, unknown to the crowd, publishes a book. He goes to his friend, François Coppée: "Cher maître," says he, "you who have acquired a universal reputation by your verses and your tales, will you not commend me to the public?" And the "cher maître," who likes the younger generation, for he has not forgotten the days, long since past, when he also was young and unknown, kindly takes his pen and writes:

"I have lived through many years; I have seen many things, many men; I have read many books, good and bad; therefore I am able to discern genius when I come across it. Be advised by me, read Mr. X.'s book, it is worth while, for . . . I was pleased with it."

And that is all. As we say in France: "Pour un vrai trio de critiques, c'est un vrai trio de critiques. O combien!" But does Mr. J. E. Yerbury understand French?
JEAN CYRANE.

BOOK REVIEWS REVIEWED.

MR. WATSON'S new book of poems has received very various treatment, in which, however, a general agreement is discernable. The *Standard* and the *Saturday Review* critics have each been led to make an estimate of Mr. Watson's work as a whole, and their views differ only slightly. This is the *Standard* critic's elaborated judgment:

"Mr. Watson has never had very much to say, and he does not seem to find more as the years grow upon him. Beautiful as his verse often is, his poetic 'message' has always been slight and unimportant, his philosophy somewhat superficial, his outlook upon life narrow and limited. He is a poet of the study, or, perhaps, we should say of the library, and, for the most part, seems rather to catch the echoes from other lyres than to strike out original harmonies of his own. But something more than scholarship and wide reading and a nice feeling for style are required for the making of a great poet."

Mr. Watson does not, as a rule, write out of the depths of a full and varied experience. But he has read his Wordsworth, his Tennyson, his Shelley, his Matthew Arnold; he has learned to manipulate a few English metres with remarkable skill; he has a gift, assiduously cultivated, of chaste, lucid, and dignified expression; and he has the true poetic command of imagery and epithet and suggestive allusion. The result is that we seldom turn his pages

without finding some passages of almost classical perfection, some exquisite touches, and a few lines that ring nobly upon the ear.

If a reader can be satisfied with good workmanship and literary accomplishment, with many a felicitous simile and metaphor, and with frequent notes that recall the greater masters, he may be well content with Mr. William Watson. For passion, for depth of emotion, for profundity of thought, for the magic of one of those inevitable phrases that live for ever, he must look elsewhere. Mr. Watson is no Theban eagle 'soaring with supreme dominion' through the azure spaces; he is only a very cultivated and conscientious poet of the later strain, whose carefully finished verses can usually be read with pleasure, but seldom with any dangerous exaltation of the critical pulses."

The *Saturday Review* sadly says:

"Serious and sober and edifying as his work is, it becomes evident that Mr. Watson has no surprises in store for us: his verse seems to be already essentially middle-aged. Almost while we were still prepared to be expectant—for from Mr. Watson's power of harmony much might have come had there been enough of imperative imagination behind it—we found ourselves beginning to look back to discover him at his strongest. And so the conviction has steadily increased that whatever rank he may take in the future must come from work already achieved."

But the *Standard* has kind words for Mr. Watson's lyrics and sonnets:

"The 'Ode in May' has a spontaneous music, not disguised by a most elaborate choice of words, which is quite captivating:

'What is so sweet and dear
As a prosperous morn in May,
The confident prime of the day,
And the dauntless youth of the year;
When nothing that asks for bliss,
Asking aught, is denied,
And half of the world a bridegroom is,
And half of the world a bride?'"

And the *Saturday* admits: "We can cordially praise work which remains sincere, often large in utterance, and correct in model without being cold."

The political element in the volume has made the *St. James's Gazette* critic angry:

"It is really quite time that the author of 'The Purple East' retired, like Lord Rosebery, from politics and went back to poetry. This little volume, though its inspiration is decidedly meagre, shows once more that there is a field in which Mr. Watson might yet grow more of those beautiful flowers of poetry which gave such promise in his earlier books. There is sometimes a new Swinburnian ring in his lines:

'We are children of splendour and flame,
Of shuddering, also, and tears.
Magnificent out of the dust we came,
An abject from the Spheres.'

The volume is mainly composed of trifles, some of them pleasing, all the work of a graceful and accomplished writer. But if Mr. Watson is content with such trifles he will shortly be relegated to the ranks of the minor poets."

The *Daily News* thinks that, regarded in one way, "the political poems—the 'Poems on Public Affairs' as the author calls most of them"—are but the expression of the same idea "as the more personal and general poems:

"We have here much that we have had before: his deep sympathy with suffering

nations and with lost causes, and the fine insight which shows him the spiritual triumph where others see only the disasters of the field. But he has, in this instance, given a fuller expression of himself in powerful 'problem' poems, which, in their full significance, are but utterances of a sublime despair."

This critic thinks that Mr. Watson's verse "has not improved in quality." "He seems to lose something of the exquisite workmanship that distinguished him, as he grows more strenuous in purpose. . . . He has been caught up in the whirl of our political controversies, and his muse may suffer from it by losing its dignity and its sense of repose."

The *Times* passes from the political poems to praise

"such glowing verse as 'Jubilee Night in Westmoreland' and the little poem called 'The Lost Eden,' which expounds in noble language the eternal significance of that ancient story. At first man dwells in Eden, but he cannot stay there: he is pressed forward by Eve,

'Eve, the adventurous soul within his soul!
The sleepless, the unslaked: '"

And he fares forth on the inevitable pilgrimage of sorrow and of joy:

"Never shall he return: for he hath sent
His spirit abroad among the infinitudes,
And may no more to the ancient pales recall
The travelled feet. But oftentimes he feels
The intolerable vastness bow him down,
The awful homeless spaces scare his soul;
And half-regretful he remembers then
His Eden lost, as some grey mariner
May think of the far fields where he was bred,
And woody ways unbreathed-on by the sea,
Though more familiar now the ocean-paths
Gleam, and the stars his fathers never knew."

The *Manchester Guardian* refuses to believe that we have yet had Mr. Watson's best work. He still "awaits a supreme opportunity for rising to the full height of a genius that we believe to be great."

"Derelecta." This story has had, at least, a *succès d'estime*. The *Daily Chronicle's* critic describes it as "an impressive book." He says:

"An impressive book, an important book. It is not without artistic blemishes, but these are atoned for by its fine spirit, its high feeling. It deals with a very terrible and a very actual situation; it brings home to us vividly the terrible conditions in which hundreds of men are condemned to struggle, here, immediately about us, every day. And then—Yvonne. Yvonne is a creation that any artist might be proud of."

The *Daily News* says that "this moving and interesting book, dealing with the tragic fate of a released prisoner," is a book to be read. "The heroine, Yvonne, is quite charming. She is a sweet, sunny-souled creature, an artist to the tips of her fingers and a woman to the core of her heart."

"Few," says the *Manchester Guardian*, "could read without stirring of the heart this picture of the desperate struggles after decent life of a man who has once fallen, but whose instincts remain sensitive and generous."

NOTICE.

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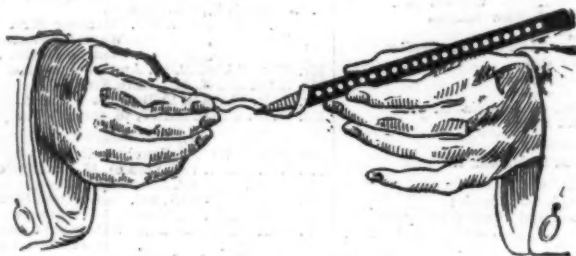
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